

THE MONGOL EMPIRE

ITS RISE AND LEGACY

by the same author

THE MAD QUEEN OF SPAIN

"A convincing interpretation of a chapter of history that has long been read differently. Joan is one of the most tragic among famous political prisoners, a sad companion figure to Mary Queen of Scots, Ivan, and the Man in the Iron Mask."—*The Spectator*



KUBLAI

THE MONGOL. EMPIRE

ITS RISE AND LEGACY

BY
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PROLOGUE

EUROPE AWAITS KING DAVID

THE date is A.D. 1221.

For the last four years, since Pope Honorius III summoned Christendom to a new crusade, a human torrent had been pouring from Europe to the East, mainly from Low Germany, Denmark, and Norway. In Frisia, Cologne, and Bremen men took ship, rounded the west coast, tarried awhile in Portugal to give their fellow-Christians there a hand against the infidel. After a year's sojourn they continued their voyage to Syria, the place of assembly for crusaders of all nationalities. Here was formed a composite army of the devout, the ambitious, adventurers of many races and speaking many tongues, with nothing in common but the Cross on their attire and the hope of battle and victory. There was little bond of unity, and the Moslems, aware of their advantage, feeling secure in their impregnable fortresses, bided their time.

Nor did they need to wait long before the crusading army began to crumble. The King of Hungary was the first leader to return to Europe, being soon followed by Duke Leopold of Austria. Those left behind in Syria removed to Egypt, which offered richer booty. They attacked the wealthy port of Damietta at the mouth of the Nile, and took it after an eighteen months' siege during which 65,000 of the 70,000 inhabitants died of pestilence and famine.

But the rejoicings in Europe over this success and over the vastness of the loot were short-lived, for now Saladin's nephews, the Sultans of Egypt and Damascus, joined forces against the Christian army and beleaguered it. The besiegers were in turn besieged, and nothing but a new crusade and fresh recruits could save them. Hopes were centred upon Frederick II, the Hohen-

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staufen Emperor, who had just been crowned by Pope Honorius III upon giving a pledge to take up the Cross. Under pressure of public opinion Frederick sent the Duke of Bavaria to Egypt in command of a fleet of galleys, but refrained from going thither in person at the head of a powerful army, so that at Easter 1221 Europe was anxiously expecting tidings of disaster from the East.

But amid the gloom came a message of hope from the crusading zealot Jacques de Vitry, Bishop of Ptolemais. He wrote to the Pope, to Duke Leopold of Austria, to King Henry III of England, to the University of Paris. Beyond belief were the tidings which the bishop sent in his various missives to Europe.

"A new and mighty protector of Christianity has arisen. King David of India, at the head of an army of unparalleled size, has taken the field against the unbelievers."

Giving the most circumstantial details, Vitry wrote that the Caliph of Bagdad had sought out the Nestorian Patriarch of that city, begging him to indite a dispatch to this Christian King David craving support against the Shah of Khwarizm, since the latter, though a Mohammedan, wished to make war against the Commander of the Faithful.

In response to the Patriarch's appeal, King David, said Vitry, had defeated the Shah of Khwarizm, conquered the mighty realm of Persia, and was (at the time of writing) only five days' march from Bagdad and Mosul. He had then sent envoys to the Caliph, demanding the cession of five-sixths of the latter's realm including the city of Bagdad, which was to become the see of the Catholic Patriarch. The Moslem ruler was further to pay so huge an indemnity that David would be able to rebuild of gold and silver the walls of Jerusalem razed a few years before.

Loud was the jubilation throughout Europe when the news came of this divine intervention. True, no one could say where in the East could be the kingdom of the Christian King David, nor who was the Shah of Khwarizm overthrown by the monarch with so propitious a name. But even the most learned saw no reason to doubt the accuracy of the information, for Jacques de

Europe awaits King David

Vitry's description was precise, and who could fail to welcome the story about David "the King of Kings who was destroying the realm of the Saracens and would protect Holy Church"? It chimed in with what had been so fervently believed not a hundred years before, that in the Far East was a huge kingdom ruled by Prester John "whose power was greater than that of all the Kings of the World."

In the days of the Second Crusade (1147-1149) the rumour was current that Prester John had attacked and overthrown the Saracens in order to help the crusaders, and Christian hearts had been profoundly stirred by the news. Then belief faded, and only the Nestorians, whose communities were spread far and wide throughout Asia, continued stubbornly to hold that a huge Christian empire existed somewhere in the East. But the Sultan would not permit any Christians from the West to gain access thither, even as Prester John closed his frontiers against the Moslems.

Vitry, however, was explicit in his story that King David was the grandson of Prester John, being "the son of King Israel". The vanguard of the troops had reached the borders of the Mesopotamian empire, but had then turned northwards to safeguard communications before attacking Jerusalem. In the north they had defeated the Georgians, who professed Christianity, indeed, but were heretical.

Jews in all the towns of Europe rejoiced no less than Christians, holding services of thanksgiving and collecting funds for a mission to meet King David, since in two of Jacques de Vitry's epistles he was described as "rex Judeorum".—This deliverer was the King of the Jews, marching westward to deliver his people from exile.

Although after a time a collation of texts showed that there had been an error on the part of the copyist in Damietta, who had written "rex Judeorum" instead of "rex Indorum"—meanwhile, as news passed from Jew to Jew by word of mouth, "King David" became "the Son of David", and "the Son of King Israel" was modified to "the King of Israel". As for the

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people whose enormous army was approaching, they must be the scattered tribes of Israel who, at the foot of Mount Sinai, had prayed to the Golden Calf.

But while Europe was thus awaiting King David, no further news of him came from the East. In the autumn Damietta had to surrender to the infidel, and the crusaders could congratulate themselves on receiving permission to depart.

Still this was taken as fresh proof of the nearness of King David. The Saracens were unusually merciful because their Sultan had warned them against proceeding to extremities. Let them profit by the example of the Shah of Persia who, heretofore always victorious, had been defeated and dethroned and had died in poverty.—Somewhere between Mesopotamia and the Caspian there must assuredly be these formidable armies. But if they were there, they failed to come to the help of the crusaders.

Far from it, for intelligence poured in from the Christian principalities of Armenia, Georgia, and other parts of Transcaucasia to the effect that their forces had been annihilated, their cities sacked, their fortresses destroyed. Then news came to hand that the assailants had crossed the Caucasus and were ravaging the plains that lay northward of the Black Sea. Here dwelt the dreaded Kumans, whose raids to the north had long been a scourge to the principalities of Russia, and in the west an affliction to the kingdom of Hungary. Now these same Kumans fled across the Danube imploring succour, and were glad when the Byzantine Emperor allowed them to settle in Macedonia and Thrace.

From the Genoese fortress of Sudak in Crimea came galleys bearing news that the place had been taken by storm and burned. Two years after the sending of Vitry's jubilant letters, from the Russian steppes information trickled through to western Europe to the effect that the armies of the Russian princelings had been destroyed and that the whole country was being ruthlessly ravaged by eastern barbarians. Terrible fellows they were, these invaders. Short in the legs but with excessively long bodies, broad in the chest and dark of visage. They drank blood.—But rumour ran that their banners bore the emblem of the Cross.

Europe awaits King David

Further reports as to their origin and their intentions were as follows. They were descendants of the peoples ruled over by the Three Kings of the East, and they were making for Cologne to carry off the relics of these Kings.—Then came later news. The invaders had turned back towards the East, and had vanished as suddenly as they had come, without leaving a trace.

Europe breathed freely. Still undiscovered was the primal law of the Euroasian continent, whose working was to persist until it was counteracted by the growth of European civilisation and the development of a new technique of war—the law of unceasing struggle between nomads and settled population. Nor did anyone yet know that this incursion had been no more than the beginning of the last and mightiest onslaught of the nomads upon the civilized world. Not until two decades later, when these fierce horsemen made a fresh descent upon Europe, turning its eastern regions into a heap of ruins and spreading terror throughout the West—exposed to the greatest peril in history—, did it become plain who had been the potentate taken by Vitry for King David. Then only did Europe begin to understand what had happened in the Far East, with the birth of a man and a nation destined to change the aspect of the world for centuries.

PART ONE

JENGHIZ KHAN

CHAPTER I

YOUNG TEMUCHIN

I

CHINA'S enemies were as old as China herself. They were the barbarians of the north, the nomadic peoples which, with their flocks and herds, moved from place to place along the margin of the Gobi Desert.

As early as the eighth century B.C., when China was nothing more than a loose agglomeration of feudal States and the Emperor of the Chu Dynasty was not so much a ruler as a mediator between the Chinese people and their gods, the barbarians of the Gobi Desert invaded the Middle Kingdom and compelled the Son of Heaven to remove his residence far into the interior of the country. During the third century B.C., the Tsin Dynasty unified China into a military State, and one of the Tsin Emperors connected up the walls with which the individual feudalist princes had endeavoured to protect their domains against the barbarians, to form one Great Wall nearly two thousand miles long which was to safeguard Northern China against the nomads. Within a few decades, however, Hunnish tribes crossed even this bulwark. At length the great Emperors of the Han Dynasty, who conquered the whole of Central Asia to beyond the Pamirs—bringing China into contact with the Parthian realm that stretched into Asia Minor and opened a route for silk trade with classical Rome—were able to defeat the Gobi barbarians and to drive them back into the desert.

But they could be neither destroyed nor subjugated. When their mounted hordes were scattered, in their flight westward the barbarians assembled the tribes on their course. This continually growing human avalanche overran the civilised States in their path, establishing short-lived dominions upon the ruins,

or, when they were repelled, they circumvented this state and moved farther on, inciting new and ever new tribes to war. Out of the forests of the north and out of the surrounding mountains, there pressed into the vacated areas of Mongolia and Central Asia more and more barbarian hordes of Mongolian, Tungusian, and Turkish stock, eager for pasturelands and eager for booty. Hungry for war and rapine, they rapidly refilled the places from which others had been expelled, ever on the watch for the first signs of weakness in their settled neighbours. Meanwhile they carried on unceasing petty warfare among themselves for grazing-grounds, live-stock, and the pitiful possessions of the nomads. Things went on like this for century after century, during a thousand years. The names and the races changed, but it was always the same picture.

These nomads could not write, the only record of their doings being kept by oral tradition in tales told round camp fire. Thus each successive generation learned about the warlike doings of its ancestors, and a Mongol of noble blood knew his lineage for at least seven generations back.

Yesukai-Bagatur, indeed, Yesukai the Strong, could trace his genealogy for eleven generations. His remotest ancestor, three-and-twenty generations back, had been Burte Chino, Grey Wolf, a prince from the distant land of Tibet, whose wife had been named Maral Goa, or Radiant Doe. Yesukai's grandfather was Kabul Khan, who ruled all the Yakka Mongols, and had even ventured to tweak the beard of the mighty Kin Emperor far away to the south-east.

But then the Kin Empire, protected by a wall on which six horsemen could ride abreast, a wall without end, entered into alliance with hostile tribes of Tartars who pastured their herds eastward and south-eastward of the Mongols between the Lake of Puir Nor and the Khingan Mountains. Though Kabul Khan killed many of the Chinese soldiers and many of the Tartars, by the time when he died of poison the power of the Mongols had been broken. His son Katul, Yesukai's uncle and last Khan of the Mongols, led many famous campaigns against the enemy, but

these were numerous as the sands of the desert and the Tartars grew stronger and stronger.

Soon many of the tribes of the steppes came to call themselves Tartars, so that the glory of this name might attach to them, and the name of the Mongols passed into oblivion. Their various tribes were called after their leaders.

When Yesukai's three brothers and many of his cousins and relatives chose him Bagatur of their Kiut-Borjigin tribe (the grey-eyed Kiuts) there were still as many as forty thousand tents under his command. So the army commanders of the Kin Empire sent envoys to him asking him to ally himself with them against the Tartar tribes who had grown too strong.

He defeated the Tartars, took their chieftain Temuchin prisoner, and, laden with booty, returned to his camp which was on the Delugun-Boldok water-parting beside the upper reaches of the River Onon—to find that his favourite wife Yulun-Eke (Mother Cloud) had given birth to a son. According to ancient custom the name of a person must commemorate the most important incident at the time of his birth, and for this reason Yesukai called his first-born Temuchin. At birth the infant held in his little clenched fist a lump of clotted blood that looked like a red jewel, and the shaman prophesied that Temuchin would become a mighty warrior.

This child Temuchin was in due course to be the greatest conqueror in history, Jenghiz Khan. He established an empire which stretched from the Mediterranean to the Pacific, from the Siberian Taiga to the Himalayas—the mightiest realm that ever existed in the world.

His people and his descendants honoured him as a divine being—Ssutu-Bogdo—the course of whose life naturally corresponded to the “heavenly” twelve-year periods of the Mongolian calendar; and since Jenghiz Khan died in the year 1227, which was known as Gach—the Year of the Pig—the chroniclers declared that his birth had taken place in the year Gach, 1155, so that his life lasted exactly six twelve-year periods. But according to the Chinese annalist, the birth occurred in Morin, the Year of the Horse, 1162.

When Temuchin was nine years old, Yesukai-Bagatur—Yesukai the Strong—set forth, according to custom, to seek a wife for his son from a distant tribe.

Never had little Temuchin travelled so far before. During the migrations of the horde from the winter pastures to the summer pastures and back again, they had kept in their tribal territory between the River Onon and the River Kerulen. They passed across wide fertile valleys between high mountains beset with thick, dark forests. On either hand were swift-running streams along whose margin cranes strutted, while on the islets in the rivers wild geese made their nests and the air was filled with grey gulls on which the boys practised archery.

But on the present journey the grass-land became scarcer. Black rocks, sometimes covered with yellow moss as if with rust, cropped out of the soil, the mountains were less lofty, but naked crags abounded, and in the ravines between these the wind roared like a waterfall. They passed Mount Darchan, traversing a region where huge black blocks of stone were scattered—a place still known in the folk-speech as “Jenghiz Khan’s Smithy”.

They had to cross ridge after ridge, and, after each of these, Temuchin saw that the descent of the switchback was not so long as the climb had been. They were reaching higher levels. Instead of trees there were only thorny scrub and heaths, while the grass was shorter and scarcer. At night the travellers usually camped beside a lake, where better fodder was to be had for the horses and there was a chance of shooting game.

Beside one such lake they met Dai Sechen—Dai the Wise—the chieftain of one of the Jungirat tribes.

Many tribes lived in the steppes of Mongolia, whose only southern boundary was the Great Wall of China. Immediately to the north of the Wall dwelt the Onguts, and between the Onguts and the Tartars, the Jungirats.

Yesukai explained that he was travelling to find a bride for Temuchin. Whereupon Dai rejoined that in a dream he had seen a white falcon holding a raven in his talons. Both men knew what this betokened. The white falcon with the raven in its

talons was the banner of the Borjigin, and Dai Sechen had a daughter named Bortei, of the same age as Temuchin. They rode together to the pasture-land of the Jungirats.

Now they had left the steppe-land, to reach bare, rocky mountains, stretches of flat stone, strips of white sand, all with a scorched look, hills and wandering dunes whipped by a terrific wind which threw clouds of sand over the riders so that they could hardly advance. Then again came naked mountains, red this time; and at last they reached steppes once more. They had crossed the Gobi Desert. After each new ridge they now made a longer descent, into wide valleys, with richer pastures and forests of elm-trees. But these were not thick forests like those of Temuchin's homeland beside the Onon.

Here dwelt the Jungirats. Dai Sechen's tribe was rich and powerful. Yesukai knew that the Chinese were wont to call the Onguts and Jungirats "White Tartars", in contradistinction to the "Black Tartars", the name they gave to the other Mongolian tribes. He saw that their felt-tents were more richly adorned than those of his own people, their clothing was finer and costlier, their weapons were more skilfully ornamented. As for Bortei, she was handsome and well-built.

Dai Sechen was also delighted with young Temuchin. The youngster rode like a grown-up, knew nothing of fatigue, was tall for his age, adroit and vigorous. The cat-like eyes that shone out of the olive-tinted visage were shrewd, and took note of all that was going on around. Nothing seemed to escape them.

Yesukai gave Dai Sechen his splendid saddle-horse, accepted gifts in return, and it was agreed that Temuchin was to stay here until the two hordes should send their live-stock to pasture together—a sign that an alliance was to be cemented.

II

Temuchin quickly realised what the neighbourhood of the Kin realm meant to the Jungirats. Chinese merchants were con-

stant visitors, bringing fine textiles, well-hardened shields with a painted lacquer cover, ivory quivers, and many kinds of ornaments, to exchange for the wares they wanted, such as furs and hides, horses, ewes and wethers, camels and yaks, not forgetting salt which the Jungirats were accustomed to collect on the banks of various Mongolian lakes. Never did these traders come empty-handed to a man with whom they wished to do business, always presenting him with some article of clothing, a trinket for his women, sweets for his children. Temuchin realised that the tents of the Jungirats abounded with treasures.—How wonderful a country must be this China which could export such an abundance of remarkable objects without seeming to miss them.

He was eager to learn more about the wonders of the Kin realm, frequenting the company of the merchants from afar, the men whose knowledge and skill he admired, and he was quick to note with what keen judgment they picked out the best cattle from a herd and chose the finest hides from the Jungirats' stock. They told him that Kin was a hundred times as powerful as the most powerful of the nomadic tribes, that its population lived in large cities fortified with lofty walls, and that within these towns was wealth beyond compare. When he wondered why Kin should send forth merchants to exchange their valuables for a few pitiful skins and beasts, instead of dispatching an army to take what they wanted without further ado, Dai Sechen told him that townsmen were by no means fervid fighters, not knowing how to ride, to hunt, to use bow and arrow, or to throw a javelin.

The boy began to feel contempt for these people of the towns. Why did Dai Sechen trade with them instead of making a foray into Kin and seizing the wealth of a skilful but feeble folk? Hereupon the merchants informed him that China was ruled by an Emperor who paid and fed hundreds of thousands of men to guard the towns against this very possibility of an inroad by the nomads. He learned a little about Chinese military art, about fighting-chariots, about infantry armed with long spears,

advancing rank behind rank, and easily able to repel a cavalry charge.

These tales made a strong impression on the lad. Still, was it not possible that these inventions were only the wiles of unwarlike men who were afraid of such warriors as his father and Dai Sechen? Had they all been valiant fighters, they might have told a very different story. Perhaps at this early date there began to dawn in him the idea of what vast possibilities there would be for a nation consisting exclusively of warriors, who could conquer these townsmen and take away their treasures.

Why should there not be a realm of warriors ruled by one Emperor? Surely his father Yesukai would be able to unite the Mongols under his banner, and Dai Sechen the Jungirats? He himself, Temuchin, might be the heir of both.

If he entertained such thoughts, he kept them to himself, having already learned that silence is golden. He was friendly, observant, and taciturn, winning everyone's good graces, while waiting until he was fourteen years old, when he could marry.

We do not know precisely how long Temuchin dwelt among the Jungirats. Most of the chroniclers declare that Yesukai, when on his way home from his bridal mission, was poisoned by the Tartars, but this can hardly have been the case, for we know that Temuchin was thirteen years old when his father died. According to one legend the youth spent several years in Kin, but the probable foundation for this is that the pasture-lands of the Jungirats were, as far as the Mongols were concerned, upon the road to Kin. Besides, had Temuchin stayed so short a time with Dai Sechen, the latter's devotion to him would have been incomprehensible, and we know that Bortei remained unwedded to another though her betrothed was four years absent.

It would therefore seem to be a fact that Temuchin had been staying three years with Dai Sechen when Munlik, one of Yesukai's relatives, arrived to say that the old man was craving for his son, who was to return forthwith to the horde beside the Onon. Dai Sechen was not best pleased, since the coming of such an emissary with such a demand was unconventional. He

had grown fond of Temuchin, however, and agreed to let the lad go upon promise of a speedy return.

Swift are the steeds of the riders of the steppes, but swifter still spread the tidings of an important happening. Speedily all the tribes knew that Yesukai was dying. He had crossed the land of the Tartars, and encountered there some tribes that were holding festival. They invited him to the feast, and refusal would have been an intolerable insult. Yesukai and his retainers were given places of honour, and the noble guest was helped to the finest portions of meat. He forgot that a wise guest eats only food that his host has tasted, but the Tartars had not forgotten the defeat inflicted upon them thirteen years before. When Yesukai continued his journey it was as a man doomed to death by poison, so that by the time when Temuchin, riding by day and by night, reached his father's horde, the great tent was already echoing to the death-keening of Yulun-Eke and of Yesukai's subsidiary wife.

III

Yesukai had united many of the tribes under his leadership—but were men to follow a boy merely because they had followed Yesukai? The tribe of the Taijiuts was strong enough and numerous enough to protect its flocks and herds unaided on the pastures. Their chieftain Targutai was the first to break away, and other chieftains soon followed him. Yulun-Eke hoisted the tribal emblem, a lance-shaft bearing four black horsetails and the frontlet of a yak, mounted her steed, and, attended by her train, rode after the seceders. But some of her followers said: "Even a deep pond will dry up, even a strong stone will crumble—what have we to do with a woman and her children?" These words sowed doubt in the minds and the hearts of those who still vacillated. A woman could not hold sway over men. One tribe after another deserted the Yesukai family, each taking with it horses and sheep in numbers which encroached more and more upon the tithe that belonged to the chieftain.

Who was to restrain the deserters? What was to be done when even Munlik, to whom the dying Yesukai had entrusted the care of his family, proved false, with his sons?

Mute and powerless was Yulun-Eke as she watched the melting away of her possessions, until at length of the mighty horde of Yesukai there remained only her own tents and those of his second wife. Hard put to it were Yulun-Eke, Temuchin, his brother Kasar, and his half-brothers Bektor and Belgutei to keep the remnants of the flocks and herds together, to hunt up stray beasts, to catch fish with hook and line, to collect berries, edible plants, and roots—for the two younger brothers and the sisters were still children.

Especially trying was it in winter, when fodder became so scarce that the beasts grew thin; and worst of all towards the end of winter, when none of the live-stock could be slaughtered to keep the rest alive. Often the family got nothing to eat but the leaves of wild plants, roots, and boiled millet—food which the Mongols in general despised.

During this lean time, every badger, every marmot, was a prize; and although Temuchin was the best tracker, and his brother Kasar was the best archer who could register almost unfailing hits, it often happened that their two half-brothers, Bektor and Belgutei, despoiled them of their booty, being the stronger.

Temuchin was the eldest, and therefore the rightful successor of Yesukai, but how could he maintain his right in face of the family quarrels? Was he to wait until his two younger brothers were big enough to support him? That would be a long time. He and Kasar were two against two, and their adversaries were stronger. Once Belgutei went out fishing alone. Temuchin hailed Kasar, and, without further ado, they pursued Bektor and shot him down.

Never before had Yulun-Eke been so angry with her sons, and never had she railed at them so angrily: "You are like wolves, like mad dogs that tear their own flesh, like crazy young camels that assail their mothers from behind, like vultures that madly

swoop to attack rocks. What have you done? Our only friends are our own shadows. We have no weapons but our own hands, and you have lopped off two of these hands and annihilated one of these shadows. What will become of the tribe of Yesukai if even his own sons cannot keep the peace with one another? Are we to continue for ever leading so unworthy a life? How are we to take vengeance upon the faithless Taijiuts, upon the treacherous Tartars?"

Temuchin made no attempt to answer his mother's railing. She was right. Henceforward he would keep peace with his relatives, for Bektor was dead, and Belgutei was only one against twain. But not by fear alone should Belgutei be kept in order. As soon as the half-brother had adapted himself to the new situation, Temuchin treated him as a friend, gave him presents, bade him take more than his share of the game, and at length converted him into a faithful henchman who never fell away in trouble and danger.

Danger came soon enough.

Fresh tidings spread across the steppes. Targutai, the chieftain of the Taijiuts, had declared himself supreme head of the Borjigin.

IV

To the headman of the Borjigin belonged the best pastures that lay upon the fertile uplands between the Rivers Onon and Kerulen, but now young Temuchin set his lean beasts to graze there, as if this territory were his rightful heritage.

Targutai did not trouble to summon the clansmen of the various hordes over which he ruled, taking only his more immediate retainers to attack the offspring of Yesukai. But Targutai did not wish to destroy the tents or carry off the horses of any of the Borjigin. He did no harm to Yulun-Eke, allowed Kasar and Belgutei to drive their horses away in safety. He and his men concentrated their attention upon Temuchin, who fled into the forest.

This was a merry hunt, most agreeable to the Taijiuts, until the fugitive entered so dense a forest that it was hard to follow him. Thereupon Targutai had the entrance to the ravine beset.

There was no hurry. On the steppes there was an abundance of fat wethers belonging to Temuchin, and the clansmen could get along with these until their own tents, with wives, children, and live-stock, were transferred to the new pastures.

For days Temuchin hungered in the woods; for days he sought escape to a new refuge, but the Taijiuts were watching too closely. On his first attempt to break out, the watchers seized him and brought him to their chief.

Targutai contemplated his prisoner with satisfaction. The youth was plainly of Borjigin blood, having grey eyes, reddish hair, an olive-tinted skin, a proud and cunning aspect—one who would develop into a fine warrior. Why should Targutai have him put to death? He might become a useful retainer. Besides, if he were killed, his brothers might lay claim to the pastures. What about extirpating the whole family of Yesukai? That might arouse the hatred and suspicion of others of the Borjigin kinship. Better to keep the young man as a hostage. But he must be shown that obedience was safer than rebellion. Targutai therefore ordered that Temuchin should be put in a cangue.

This was the Chinese equivalent of the western stocks, a heavy wooden frame locked around the neck, which prevented the wearer from lying down. His hands were fastened to either side of the yoke, and, to chasten the young man's pride, he was guarded not even by a warrior, but merely by a youth like himself. The clansmen assembled in Targutai's tent to celebrate their capture.

Night fell, and the moon rose. Temuchin's guardian had his eyes fixed on Targutai's tent, longing to be there and feasting on the mutton that was being consumed. Temuchin stole silently up behind the youth, upon whom he flung himself. A blow with the corner of the cangue was sufficient to stun the guardian, and Temuchin made good his escape.

When the guardian was discovered insensible, Targutai realised his mistake. He ordered that the banquet should be broken off,

and Temuchin pursued. On this fine, moon-lit night the track was easy to follow. It led down to the river.

It was impossible that a man wearing a cangue could swim across the Onon, so the clansmen scattered to hunt up and down the stream. One of them only remained where he was on the bank, looking attentively at the water. His sharp eyes had detected among the reeds, about a spear-cast away, a round object.

When the other horsemen were out of hearing, he called: "Yes, yes, it is for such reasons as this that people do not like you." Then he rode slowly after the others.

Temuchin, immersed up to his neck, had recognised old Sorgan-Shira, with whose children he had often played in his father's horde. Waiting until all was quiet, he cautiously crept out of the reeds and slowly made for the bank. His hands, fastened to the cangue at the height of his shoulders, were stiff with cold, and his neck ached from the burden of the wooden frame. To continue his flight thus manacled was impossible. Rolling in the grass until he had squeezed most of the water out of his clothing, he stole into the camping-ground of the horde, found Sorgan-Shira's tent, and concealed himself beneath a pile of fleeces.

In this safe hiding-place, Temuchin heard the riders return one after another, and begin a casual search of the tents. One actually thrust a spear into the pile of fleeces, but another said: "What's the use? It's so hot that no one would hide there." Then they decided that they would search the whole camp next morning once more, and if they could not find the fugitive, they would take up the chase again. At length the camp was still, and Sorgan-Shira returned to his tent.

Temuchin leapt out of his hiding-place.

"What on earth are you doing here?" whispered Sorgan-Shira indignantly. "Did you not hear that to-morrow they are going to make a thorough search of the camp? If they find you here, the smoke will rise no more above my tent, and my tribe will be wiped out for ever."

"The same thing will happen if Targutai learns that you saw me among the rushes and did not make me prisoner," answered Temuchin. "Take off this cangue and give me some food."

Sorgan-Shira realised that it might be to his advantage to let Temuchin escape. He removed the cangue and burned it, gave the lad a bow and a quiverful of arrows, provided him with food and drink, and told him where Targutai had posted sentries round the horde. As soon as the moon set, Temuchin made his way out of the camp, seized a horse, and rode off.

Never did he forget Sorgan-Shira's help, even though given under some constraint. In later days, when they went hunting together, he let Sorgan-Shira take the game. As Khan, he made Sorgan-Shira one of his nine Orlok, who were the chief of his retainers, and his benefactor's sons received high distinction.

Continuing his flight, he rode where the trees grew thickest, and where only an expert could find a path—in the mountain massif of Burkan-Kaldun. This was the original home of the Kiut-Borjigin, and their last refuge in time of danger. Hither, so the legend ran, an ancestor of his race had found asylum from his enemies. And here, so we are told, heaven sent him food daily through the instrumentality of a falcon.

This falcon, as a tutelary spirit, was depicted on the banner of the tribe, and in the gorges of these mountains many of the stock of Kiut-Borjigins had always felt safe from their enemies.

Here Temuchin found his mother Yulun-Eke with Kasar, his younger brothers and sisters, together with Belgutei, and all they had succeeded in saving from Targutai's raid. There was little enough: nine horses, a few wethers, and anything, of course, which they had been able to carry off in the tilt-carts.

Maybe the refugees presumed too much on their safety, or maybe it was because their enemies belonged to the same stock as themselves. But anyhow one day when Belgutei was out hunting marmots and when Temuchin and Kasar were visiting their traps, in the clearing where the horses grazed there appeared a troop of Taijiut robbers and drove off their eight horses.

Pursuit on foot would have been fruitless, so they had to wait

till Belgutei returned in the evening with his mount. Then Temuchin set out after the thieves.

- For three days he rode on their trail. He had finished the dried meat that he had brought with him between his saddle and his horse's back; the mare was stumbling from fatigue, and could hardly put one foot in front of the other. On the fourth day he met a young man of his own age, and asked for information about some riders who were driving off eight cream-coloured horses. They were horse-thieves, he said, and he himself was Temuchin, the son of Yesukai, in pursuit of them.

To his astonishment, the youth promptly supplied him with food and drink, tethered the mare among his own horses on the pasture, chose two fresh mounts, and declared that he, Bogurchi (the Infallible), would join his new friend in the pursuit.

During the ride, which lasted another three days, the two young men became good friends, and Temuchin learned that throughout the steppes there was talk of his wonderful escape from Targutai's camp, which was held to be almost past belief. His courage and address were universally admired, and all the youth of those parts beheld in him an example.

Soon they saw the Taijiuts in the distance, recognised the horses of which they were in search, and, after nightfall, stole up and carried them off from the pasture.

Next morning the Taijiuts were in pursuit.

Bogurchi proposed to stay behind and fight the pursuers, while his friend rode ahead with the horses, but Temuchin would not agree to this. Now and again he looked back at the pursuers, who were spread out in a long line extending back to the horizon, and each time as he faced forward again he looked well pleased.

"Our horses are good," said he. "We can change at full gallop from horse to horse if either of our mounts grows tired."

Bogurchi, too, looked back occasionally at the Taijiuts, but his mien grew gloomier and gloomier. It was true that the line of the pursuers trailed out more and more, but the foremost riders were still gaining on them. The chase was led by a warrior mounted on a splendid stallion. One could see that ere long he

would use his "arkan"—his lasso—and fling the noose round their necks.

"I will halt," said Bogurchi, who could no longer bear the strain, "I will have a shot at him."

"Not yet," answered Temuchin. "Let him come closer, and then he will be farther away from his comrades. We will both halt when the time comes. We shall be two against one, Bogurchi, and we must go on playing the same game, so that they can only overhaul us one at a time, and we kill each pursuer before another can come up."

When the horseman was quite close, and was already loosing his lasso, Temuchin halted and told Bogurchi to make ready his bow.

"Shoot," he exclaimed.

Bogurchi discharged an arrow, and at the same moment Temuchin switched both horses so that they galloped fiercely ahead.

Bogurchi's arrow hit the mark, and the rider fell from his horse.

When the young men looked back after a little, they saw that the leading Taijiut had pulled up to succour the wounded man. Again, after a while, they looked back. More of the pursuers had come up and halted beside their injured companion. But no one pursued them further, and they were quickly forging ahead.

Now Bogurchi, too, laughed.

"This is another of your exploits," he said, "which will carry your name far and wide and make the hearts of our young men beat proudly."

Temuchin offered his friend half of the horses which the pair had regained; but Bogurchi refused to accept anything.

"What sort of a friend should I be if I allowed you to pay me for such a service?" he exclaimed.

The youths rode to see Bogurchi's father, to ask pardon because, without leave, the son had abandoned the herds of which he was in charge, but the old man was proud of his son's deed and of the new friendship. He provided Bogurchi with horses,

spare clothing, and a tent, told the two to remain good friends and never to part one from the other.

Thus when Temuchin got back to his horde he was accompanied by his first vassal.

Soon a man who had fought under his father Yesukai came to him in the camp requesting him to take Jelmi, the old fellow's son, as a second vassal. Hardly did it become known throughout the steppes that Temuchin would be glad to have retainers, than from all directions young Mongols arrived to serve under his banner. By the time he was seventeen, Temuchin was no longer a poor lad forsaken by the world, one who found it difficult to provide food for his brothers and sisters by catching fish and hunting game; for he had become a lord, though only over a small camp. His name was held in high repute on the steppes, and there was talk of his bold deeds round the camp fires.

V

Only now, after four years, did Temuchin, accompanied by his half-brother Belgutei, return to the abode of Dai Sechen, to claim his bride Bortei. He never doubted for a moment that she would have waited for him, nor did he doubt that Dai Sechen, who had given his word to the heir of a lord of 40,000 tents would keep it to a young man now in greatly reduced circumstances—and nevertheless he had allowed four years to pass, although kinship with the chieftain of the Jungirats might have spared him both poverty and hardship. But he was too proud to demand fulfilment of the pledge until he had bettered his condition. "No one thinks anything of you if you come as a beggar," he was wont to exclaim.

Now he had a name which counted. Even though he could not bring costly gifts or arrive with a great train of followers, he need not be ashamed of leading a wealthy bride home.

Merry laughter greeted his arrival and good-humoured quips were tossed to and fro.

"I'm glad that you are alive and cheerful," said Dai Sechen. "We had hardly expected ever to see you again, for you have so many enemies."

Temuchin was glad to learn that the news of his adventures had spread thus far. He was regarded with wonder and admiration.

During these four years of absence, he had grown tall and broad-shouldered. His cat-like eyes were as penetrating and attentive as ever, but his gaze was sterner and more reserved. He spoke even less than of old, but what he said had been carefully pondered.

The bridal feast was long and sumptuous, just as if he had come with numerous retainers instead of being accompanied only by his half-brother. As dowry he received a cloak of brownish-black sable, a gift which was worth more than all his other possessions put together. When he left for home, he was not accompanied by Bortei alone. A number of her friends of both sexes came with her to the Onon. The bride of a chieftain was entitled to her own tent and her own train, and she brought them with her.

Temuchin's horde had of a sudden become populous and wealthy, and the warriors were as young as their chieftain. •

CHAPTER II

EXPANDING POWER

I

THE members of the horde at the foot of Mount Burkan-Kaldun were light-hearted and exuberant. The young men hunted and made merry. Merry were the days, care-free the nights. No scouts ranged the forest, and no sentries guarded their sleep.

One night, of a sudden, savage cries disturbed the nocturnal peace. Strangers were storming the camp, flinging brands on to the tents, driving off the cattle and horses.

In a moment Temuchin was awake. Had Targutai and his Taijiuts returned to the charge? Seizing bow and spear, he donned his sable cloak, leaped on to his horse, and made for the thick forest in the gorge. Some of his retainers followed him. His brothers and the rest of the tribe dispersed in every direction, each seeking safety where he could.

A few days passed in uncertainty. Looking forth from their hiding-place, the fugitives saw that many riders were in search of them on the slopes of the mountains. Then all grew still again, and Temuchin sent spies to the camp.

It had been vacated.

Women, tents, carts, most of the live-stock had disappeared. The track of the raiders led, not eastward, towards the pastures of the Taijiuts, but northward, into the forests.

Gradually the dispersed horde got together again. Many had seen the enemy close at hand, others had listened to their talk. The raiders were Merkits, men from the northern woodlands, dangerous fellows, fierce hunters, belonging to the tribe from which, twenty years before, Yesukai had forcibly taken his wife

Yulun-Eke. Had they laid their hands on Temuchin, what would have threatened him would not have been imprisonment and a demand for the recognition of Targutai's overlordship, but slavery or death.

Mounting the highest peak of Burkan-Kaldun, he took off his girdle, hung it round his neck as a sign of humiliation, turned his cap inside out on his fist, made nine genuflexions, poured a libation of koumiss, and returned thanks to the Eternal Blue Heaven (Menke Koko Tengri) for his marvellous escape.

"For the second time Mount Burkan-Kaldun has saved my poor life," he said devoutly. "Henceforward I shall always offer up sacrifices to it, and shall instruct my children and grandchildren to maintain the observance."

Then he put on his cap again, resumed his girdle, as is proper to the free Mongols, and descended the mountain.

At its foot there had assembled those who had escaped the onslaught—but Bortei was not among them. Accustomed to the safe shelter of her paternal horde, she had never expected such a night assault, and had not fled swiftly enough. Some declared that they had seen her being carried off by the Merkits, who were in a hurry, after storming the camp, to make good their retreat into the forest with whatever they had been able to lay hands upon—before any other Mongol tribe turned up to the rescue.

Temuchin neither complained nor mourned. His was the blame. It was owing to his carelessness that this fate had befallen Bortei. For her sake he did what he had never done before in the years of his worst distress, he curbed his pride and set out to beg for help. He rode westward, hundreds of miles, to the land where the Keraites dwelt.

The Keraites were certainly the most notable among the tribes of Mongolia proper. Their pasture-land lay between the rivers Tula and Orchon, but they also had some fixed settlements. The caravan route from Kin to the countries of the Naimans and the Uighurs led across their territory. This was westward, towards

the Altai Mountains and Zungaria. Among the Keraites were many Nestorian Christians and Moslems.

Their leader, the mighty Togrul Khan, had been "anda" or blood-brother of Temuchin's father Yesukai. Temuchin might have applied to him long since, but only now, when he had lost Bortei, could he bring himself to this resolve. Even so, he did not come with empty hands, but took the best of his possessions, the costly sable cloak, a royal present. Reminding the Kerait Khan of the blood-brotherhood between him and Yesukai, he begged the privilege of becoming Togrul's adopted son.

Togrul Khan had already heard of the Merkit raid. These Merkits were neighbours of his with whom he was often at feud. Now his old friend's son had come to him. Temuchin's filial piety pleased the Khan, and the fine sable cloak pleased him even more. Remembering that Yesukai had helped him when he was at war with his relatives, he now placed a considerable force at Temuchin's disposal.

II

* Swift are the horses of the riders of the steppes, but swifter still is the movement of rumour in these regions. Temuchin was now adopted son of the mighty Togrul Khan. In a flash his position had changed. The Mongol clans flocked to join him from all sides.

Some joined him that he might more speedily forget the way in which, five years ago, they had basely deserted him. Others regarded Yesukai's son as likely to be a valuable protector against the ambition of Targutai, chieftain of the Taijiuts. A third group hoped for rich booty in the campaign against the Merkits. Even Jamuga Sechen, chieftain of the Juriats, remembered that Temuchin, with whom, in boyhood, he had played on the ice of the Onon, was his blood-brother, and hastened with his tribe to join the raid.

The Mongolian Saga tells us about the punitive expedition: "The three hundred men who came to Mount Burkan-Kaldun

and rode round it were killed down to the last man. Those of their women who were suitable to be made wives, were made wives; those that were suitable to be made slaves, were made slaves."

In the chieftain's tent Temuchin found his Bortei once more, with a newborn infant in her arms, a boy. Being dubious as to its paternity, he called the infant Juji, the Guest.

Therewith he broke off the campaign, declaring: "I have found that of which I was in search." He sent Togrul's men back to the Khan, and with them, as a gift, his own share of the plunder.

The Mongols could not understand what Temuchin was about. In the neighbourhood were many other tribes of Merkits. With the aid of Togrul's strong reinforcements, Temuchin could have easily defeated them and secured abundant loot. His allies, likewise, were dissatisfied. He had deprived them of the possibility of penetrating deeper into the country of the Merkits, and perhaps of attacking the Merkit Khan Toto, an old enemy of Togrul.

It never occurred to anyone that this youthful and taciturn Mongolian leader with a reserved countenance might have ideas of his own. No one dreamed that his desire was to leave the balance of power in Mongolia undisturbed until he was himself strong enough to turn the scale. Probably it suited his purpose better to send the Keraites home as soon as possible, leaving Toto undefeated to threaten Togrul's frontiers. Maybe, too, he thought that Toto might be useful on his own frontier should Targutai and the Taijiuts make another raid. In this country, where there was a perpetual campaign of all against all, the enemies of yesterday would often become blood-brothers to-day, and allies in a campaign would frequently quarrel over the division of the spoil.

III

After his victory over the Merkits, Temuchin was no longer alone. During the campaign he had renewed his childhood's

friendship with Jamuga Sechen, chieftain of the Juriats. And now the two young men rode together over the pastures of the Mongols. From afar, Targutai kept watch on his adversary's every movement, but realised that for the time being it would be foolhardy to attack this carefully watched horde which had plenty of spies in its service. Temuchin, it seemed, was no longer troubled about his former enemy, but he was careful to keep away from the best feeding grounds on the lower Onon where the chieftain of the Taijiuts was wont to pasture his herds; and whenever he got into touch with any of the tribes that were vassal to Targutai, Temuchin was extremely liberal, being lavish in gifts and festivals, inviting them to hunt with him, and inaugurating game-drives for their benefit. Soon it began to be whispered abroad throughout the steppes: "The chieftains of the Taijiuts oppress and harass us without cause. They rob us of our best horses and our finest furs. But Temuchin is ready to take off his own cloak and give it away, or dismounts from his own horse and bestows it as a gift."

Tribe after tribe espoused his cause; his adherents grew in numbers, and soon his intimates began to entertain ambitious hopes.

When his warriors assembled round the fires fed with dried cattle-dung, they sang songs about the heroic deeds of the old Khans, and a saga circulated to the effect that by the decision of the powers in the Eternal Blue Heaven a new hero would soon arise to reunite the Mongol tribes and to take vengeance upon all their enemies. Mukuli, one of Temuchin's most zealous retainers, went so far as to declare openly that their young leader, and no one else, would be this hero.

Jamuga, too, was ambitious, and his followers became more numerous. But he did not make enough distinction whether a retainer who came to join him was in command of hundreds of tents or brought only women and children. He seemed especially fond of the "karachu"—the common folk—and the chieftains of the clans and the tribes considered that he did not pay them sufficient honour.

The chieftains who served under Temuchin were held in more respect. He never forgot that he himself was of aristocratic birth, and his main object was throughout to attract the aristocracy of the steppes to his banner, knowing that thus only could he win to prestige and power. Within the domain over which he held sway, ancient customs and the order of precedence were strictly observed, even though he was not too narrow in his observance of the privileges of birth. His first retainers, Bogurchi, Jelmi, and Mukuli, were not of noble descent, but had pushed themselves to the front by bravery, circumspection, and loyalty. They, therefore, were given the privilege of sitting in the Council of the Nobles which had already gathered around him. The career thus opened to bravery and talent was a lure to all bold warriors.

There were two divergent outlooks within the one camp. The adherents of Temuchin owned especially horses and horned cattle; the retainers of Jamuga owned chiefly wethers and ewes. There were many sources of friction. Yulun-Eke and Bortei, his mother and his wife, continually urged Temuchin to break with his blood-brother, who did not know what was seemly and customary.

Temuchin hesitated for a long time. For a year and a half the pair were living together, and the separation of the camps would weaken Temuchin by halving his forces. Nevertheless Temuchin followed the advice of his mother and his wife and found it sound. The final breach between the two men gave a signal. The clansmen of aristocratic birth, who had hitherto lived as isolated nomads, and were disinclined to follow the banner of any upstart chieftain, decided now to follow the son of Yesukai. To the rising standard rallied the famous representatives of the old Mongolian stock: such men as Daaritai, a grandson of Kabul Khan; his uncle Altan, a son of Katul Khan; and Kuchar, a relative of Temuchin belonging to the older line of the Borjigin. Each such accession brought in other tribes, whose chieftains were glad to move among the noblesse of the Mongols.

Thus Temuchin's forces swelled to the magnitude of 13,000

tents, and he knew well how to treat each retainer in accordance with dignity and service. Quite unusual and exemplary order prevailed in his domain. Every man knew his place and knew what was expected of him, for the young leader would tolerate no misconduct or injustice. So much beloved was he that his men would have been ashamed to defalcate in allotting the tithes which were due, or to cheat him of a calf or a sheep. Nor was he himself petty or avaricious. To one who brought him his due, he would perhaps give a present of even greater worth or he would ask with keen interest about the retainer concerned. He was a master who never forgot the needs of his men.

He even did something which no ruler before him had done, discovering a sport for his warriors, a pastime as fascinating as the chase or war, for it was a sham-fight, a training in warfare.

He divided his 13,000 into thirteen "guran" or corporations—each guran attacking, retreating, and wheeling as a unit. They had to try to circumvent one another, to take the mimic adversary in the flank or pierce his centre. This was a game which inflamed their fighting blood, and Temuchin had often to intervene lest the sham-fight should become grim earnest, for each guran, each regiment, consisted of men who were closely akin, so that brothers, cousins, and friends fought side by side, and a defeat—even in a sham-fight—was felt to be a disgrace.

Thus he inculcated discipline and collaboration even upon the most savage of the nomads.

We are never likely to divine whence Temuchin derived his notion of forming such squadrons of cavalry to manœuvre and fight in one mass. Perhaps the tales he had heard of the Chinese art of war had remained active in his mind since the days of his boyhood among the Jungirats. However that may be, he began the "war game" with his force of 13,000 men, and as his domain grew, so likewise grew the strength of his trained fighting forces. Since every Mongol, from childhood upwards, was an excellent horseman and a first-class archer, Temuchin soon created a nation of armed cavalry such as the world had never seen.

IV

In spring and autumn, when the tribes broke camp and removed with their flocks and herds to new pasturage, there always came dangerous times for the nomads who were continually surrounded by foes. Busied with tending the huge bodies of live-stock, hampered by women and children, burdened by their goods and chattels, their fighting capacity was greatly diminished, and Temuchin, whose youthful heedlessness was now a thing of the past, found these migrations an anxious business. Fundamentally cautious, he established for the spring and fall treks a carefully considered order of march which he subsequently turned to account in his campaigns.

First rode the scouts, spread out like a fan. They sought suitable camps, examined the condition of the wells and the pastures in regions previously known to them, and reported frequently to the rear. If the tribe had reason to expect a hostile onslaught, they kept sharp watch for ambushes and spies. They were followed by the advance-guard, which was strong enough to fight independent actions. When peace prevailed, this advance-guard had to begin making arrangements for the nocturnal camp, see to it that there was an abundance of water, and arrange the order in which the main body should visit the wells. Thus doubly covered and protected, the main force followed, consisting of the bulk of the fighting men, with tents, wives, children, live-stock, and vehicles conveying the nomads' possessions. A rear-guard picked up the stragglers, caught strayed beasts, and were ready to ward off attack from behind.

During one of these migrations, news came that armed Taijiuts had been sighted. Before long the advance-guard was skirmishing with them. Prisoners were brought in.

Targutai had resolved upon a decisive blow. Summoning all the Taijiuts, who hoped for rich spoils if Temuchin should be defeated, he had also won over some of the neighbouring tribes and had in this way assembled 30,000 warriors under his command.

Thirteen thousand were faced by thirty thousand.

In later days it became a habit with Temuchin to fight against odds. With one exception, his many battles were against strongly superior forces; and all except two of them were victorious. But this was his first pitched battle, and Targutai's forces were not merely more than twice as strong as his, but the enemy had every advantage, since the Taijiuts were horsemen unencumbered by women and live-stock. Yet for the very reason that the Mongols had women and children, flocks and herds, with them, it was necessary to fight, since to run away would mean the loss of everything the nomads possessed and of what they required to keep themselves alive.

At this moment of supreme need, Temuchin broke away from tradition. With that marvellous understanding of the enemy's mind and nature which always characterised him in difficult situations, the young Mongolian commander modified the whole order of battle.

The usual practice in such nomadic combats was to make a laager of waggons in the middle of which the flocks and herds were guarded while the warriors descended from the waggons, either to ride against the foe, or to withdraw within the protection of the laager. Temuchin, however, commanded that the carts should be arranged in a circle on one of his extreme wings, and he entrusted the defence of this circle to women and children armed with bows and arrows. Then he ranged his thirteen guran in series until the other wing of his army was adjacent to a forest impenetrable by cavalry. Each guran was drawn up as in the sham-fight: a hundred horsemen wide, and ten horsemen deep, the front and the flanks being held by heavy cavalry, men who had armour of strong hide fortified by iron plates, to protect themselves and their mounts.

The Taijiuts advanced in a broad front, five files deep. The first two lines, which likewise consisted of armoured cavalymen, suddenly halted, to allow the light horsemen, whose only armour was of tanned hide, to advance between them to the attack, throwing javelins, and overwhelming the Mongols with a storm of arrows.

Temuchin's thousands held their ground, and answered with like weapons, their javelins and arrows compelling the Taijiuts to retreat, perhaps sooner than they should have done.

The usual course of such a combat was that the heavy cavalry, allowing the light horsemen to pass through to their rear, themselves advanced at full gallop against the enemy whose ranks should have been disordered by the preliminary skirmish, so that the two lines of heavily armed horsemen could break their formation. But Temuchin, the instant the light cavalry retreated, ordered his gurans to counter-attack, and before the two lines of Targutai's heavily armed horsemen had re-formed front properly, the ten files of the gurans were upon them, and penetrated the thin force of adversaries in thirteen places.

Now, once more according to tradition, the fight should have degenerated into a series of disorderly duels between horseman and horseman. Instead of this, the men of each guran wheeled round, and whenever the scattered Taijiuts tried to get together again they encountered men in close formation who attacked them fiercely, rode them down, and dispersed them.

The significance of Temuchin's new formation now became plain. He had thereby lured the majority of the enemy forces, which so greatly outnumbered his own, from the place where the decision must occur. The light horsemen, having fulfilled their orders in the preliminary skirmish, forsook the main battlefield to attack the laager of carts, thinking that the first to reach this would win the richest booty. But before they had been able to overcome the strenuous defence of the women and children and penetrate the laager, they were themselves taken in the rear by the nearest guran, which pitilessly cut them down.

The tribes which had joined Targutai in the hope of easy loot were the first to take flight.

By nightfall the victory of the Mongols was complete. More than 6,000 Taijiuts had been slain, and seventy of the leaders taken prisoner.

But the Mongolians, too, had sustained heavy losses. Temuchin

was wounded by an arrow in the neck, and was carried off the field by the faithful Jelmi at the risk of his own life.

When Temuchin came to himself, he ordered that the seventy leaders should be executed, with Targutai at their head.

This was something new in warfare among the nomads. They would take an adversary prisoner, make him a slave, or hold him to ransom, but they only killed a personal enemy, a rival in the struggle for power, a rebel. By this unprecedented order, Temuchin stigmatised the condemned chiefs as having been, so to say, rebels against his rightful supremacy as the son of Yesukai. He further emphasised his claims by immediately removing with all his retainers to the tribal pastures beside the lower waters of the Onon.

The Persian chroniclers declare that he had the Taijiut chieftains boiled to death in seventy cauldrons, while, according to a Russian authority, he had Targutai's cranium set in silver, to make a drinking cup, which subsequently bore the name of "The Wrath of Jenghiz Khan". But no such stories are to be found in Mongolian or Chinese sources. Purposeless cruelty and barbarity do not square with our other information as to Temuchin's character. No doubt he would cold-bloodedly have flourishing cities reduced to heaps of ruins if they resisted him, and he would lay wealthy provinces waste did they seem likely to revolt—but his acts of cruelty were purposive, things to which he felt constrained by military necessity, vengeance, or the need to strike terror into his enemies. He counted human life as of little worth, and he destroyed it, as we destroy rats when we regard them as noxious, taking this as a matter of course. But he was not cruel from sheer lust of cruelty and could even forgive a personal enemy.

While he was on his way to the Onon, a rider appeared among the Mongolian forces, spurred up to Temuchin, dismounted, and flung himself at the conqueror's feet, saying:

"I am Jirgadei of the tribe of Issut. It was I who shot the arrow which wounded you in the battle. If you slay me, you will only defile a fragment of earth, but if you take me into

your service, I will still the torrent for you and crumble rocks to sand."

The chieftains in Temuchin's train were only awaiting a sign to hew down this boaster who had shed the blood of their lord. But Temuchin gave no such sign. Thoughtfully he contemplated the young warrior lying before him in the dust.

"When an enemy wishes to kill someone, he keeps the fact secret," he said at length. "But you have been frank with me. Become, therefore, my companion. In memory of your deed, I will name you 'Jebei'—the arrow."

He raised the suppliant, and allowed him to choose nine men, whom he should lead.

This trait was characteristic of Temuchin throughout life. Frankness, boldness, fidelity, even when shown by his enemies, were always rewarded. By winning over such men to his side, he was sure that he would gain advantages which would more than make good the harm they had done him as adversaries. Nor did he ever err in the choice of his companions. This young corporal became Jebei Noyon, Prince Arrow—, who was the first to make his way into China, who rode across the Pamirs, who in common with Sabutai, overran Persia, climbed over the Caucasus, and defeated the Russian princes.

V

Temuchin was the rightful overlord of the Borjigin, and the others were only rebels whom he had punished with death. Temuchin was again in possession of the original home of his tribe, and anyone who wished to avoid being accounted a rebel would do well to submit to him and show devotion.

Now there began a migration of the dispersed Taijiut clans and of all the others who had fallen away from Temuchin after Yesukai's death. They came back to the Onon.

Temuchin gave them a friendly reception, even Munlik, who had so disloyally abandoned the family entrusted to his care by

Yesukai. He now returned hesitatingly to the horde of Temuchin. No word of reproach was uttered, and he was given a place of honour among the nobles.

Nevertheless Munlik was very well aware that Temuchin had forgotten nothing, so, to make up for his previous desertion, he was more than zealous in the cause, going from tribe to tribe, from clan to clan, declaring everywhere that now the time had arrived to choose once more a Khan of the Mongols.

His words were heard with enthusiasm by Temuchin's retainers. Moreover, when Munlik's son Gokchu, who, though a youth, was already a famous shaman, loudly proclaimed that the Eternal Blue Heaven—Menke Koko Tengri—had declared that none other than Temuchin was to be the Khan of the Mongols, there was no further resistance.

Among the chieftains in the horde there were several who regarded themselves as of better birth and more worthy of election, but they mistrusted one another. Why should Daaritai, the grandson of Kabul Khan, obey his cousin Sacha-beki? Or why should either of them obey Altan, the son of Katul Khan? Or any one of the three obey their cousin Kuchar? Temuchin was of lower rank than any of them, and when they elected him Khan, none of them seemed to be sacrificing anything, for Temuchin knew what was due to their position, and paid respect to them on every occasion.

Even when Munlik, in the presence of the nobles, had proposed Temuchin as Khan, Temuchin declared each of the four in turn, in order of age, to be better worthy of the dignity than he. But they refused, insisting:

"We want you to be Khan. If you become Khan, we shall always be foremost in the fight against the foe, and when we take pretty women and girls prisoner, we shall bring them and the best of the loot to you. On the hunt, we shall be before all the others, and shall hand over to you the game we strike down. If, in battle, we exceed your orders, or, in quiet times, we do you any wrong, take from us our wives and our herds, and drive us into the unpeopled desert."

This was a good utterance, which pleased the other chieftains, and clearly indicated the position of the Khan of the Mongols. It was his business to lead them to victory that they might gain all the heart of a nomad could desire: handsome women, swift horses, good weapons, and costly clothing. It was his business to see that there should be good opportunities for the chase, and to find rich pastures for the flocks and the herds. That was why they were willing to give him the best of the booty, and to obey him in battle. But as soon as the war was over, their only duty was to do nothing that would interfere with his plans, and to keep out of his way.

Temuchin recognised the limits imposed upon his rights and his duties, saying:

"All here assembled have resolved to join me and to appoint me Khan. Should Heaven preserve me and help me, you will all, my first adherents, be my lucky companions."

The choice was celebrated by abundant feasting. The eight-and-twenty year old Khan did not stint the provision of food and drink. He did not provide merely the usual koumiss (fermented mare's milk) but actually kara koumiss, for which the milk had been whipped so long that the thicker portion had settled, and the drink was limpid and beautifully intoxicating.

There was additional ground for feasting and merry-making. Munlik was marrying Yulun-Eke, Temuchin's mother. This was a marriage of a quite unusual sort, for the rule among the Mongols was that widows must not remarry, since after death they would have to return to their first husband. That was why the sons took over their fathers' wives—except their own mother. Munlik, by marrying Yulun-Eke, thereby showed his devotion to the dead Yesukai, for whom he thus preserved her. Such an event needed special festivities, and neither Yulun-Eke nor Munlik would lag behind the new Khan in hospitality.

At this festival, indeed, too much koumiss was drunk. For suddenly the wife of one of the chiefs complained that she was receiving less honour than the wife of another, and the two husbands began to quarrel. Belgutei, Temuchin's half-brother,

who was acting as cup-bearer, tried to restore order, with the result that the disputants turned against him and wounded him in the shoulder. Other chieftains came to his aid, and soon there was a battle royal with pots and kettles as weapons, until at length Temuchin's more immediate followers drove the others out of the tent.

Temuchin himself took no part in this broil. Motionless and dignified, the young Khan sat throughout upon his white horse-skin throne. Even when two of those who were driven out, Sacha-beki and his friend Daichu, instead of shrugging their shoulders and accepting their lot, rode away in a huff, he said nothing. Indeed, he sent several envoys to them, so that outwardly, at least, peace was restored. The feasting was resumed as if nothing had happened. But Temuchin noted everything and forgot nothing.

CHAPTER III

ALLIANCE WITH THE KHAN OF THE KERAITS

I

“**A**T length the Mongols have learned wisdom,” said Togrul, Khan of the Keraits, when he heard of Temuchin’s election. “How could they expect to get along without a Khan?”

He was glad, too, that his adoptive son had received this dignity. The race of the true Mongols, the Beydey, as they called themselves, was one of the smallest of the nomadic peoples inhabiting the steppes and the margin of the Gobi Desert, and almost every people had a Khan, a Bey, or some other Prince, who maintained order, after a fashion, in his territories.

But the power of these nomadic chieftains was strictly limited. The individual clan-leaders transferred allegiance with their tribes from one overlord to another; they carried on mutual warfare; and would even attack any ruler who was weak.

That was why Temuchin, who had had personal experience of the vicissitudes of nomadic life, never took his new dignity too seriously, but did his utmost to strengthen his horde. Every bold warrior was welcome to him; every such warrior could serve under Bogurchi, Jelmi, Mukuli, Belgutei, the loyalest of the loyal, whom he had appointed his Orlok (the highest). They manœuvred in circumscribed units, practised archery, learned to fight, and were then enrolled in the existing troops. By degrees, in this way, the young Khan established a small regular army, a force of élite, always ready to fight, and wholly devoted to him.

But Temuchin was not concerned only about his immediate horde; he also watched over his whole domain.

On the pretext that he was promoting the welfare of his vassals, and preparing, in case of need, to hasten to their aid, he issued orders that every tribe under his jurisdiction was immediately to inform him of any remarkable occurrence. He himself held a number of his best riders ready to act as messengers, and every horde into whose district they entered was expected to provide them with fresh mounts so that "like an arrow" they could continue to discharge the Khan's orders.

Never before had any Khan wanted to know what each of his vassal tribes was doing. But the emissaries who now reported to Temuchin were hospitably entertained, and given presents with which they were able to make a great show when they returned home—with the result that the warriors liked riding to the Onon, always finding something about which they could inform the Khan. The pasture was being changed; a friendly tribe had come to pay a visit; or simply traders from somewhere or other had turned up. Temuchin, plying these emissaries well with koumiss, learned what he wanted to know about the activities and schemes of their chieftains.

It was one such messenger who informed him that from the realm of Kin an embassy had been sent to Togrul, Khan of the Keraites. Whereupon Temuchin sent the Chinese an orderly bearing an invitation to visit him in his horde.

Among the duties of such an embassy as that which now came from China, was the obligation to report on all events taking place in the land of the barbarians, so these emissaries were glad to make the detour by way of the Onon, in order to find out what sort of man was this new Khan.

The encounter gave great satisfaction to both parties. Temuchin received the embassy with the respect and cordiality he had learned among the Jungirats; his wife, the Kins became aware, was the daughter of a chieftain who lived close to the Kin frontier, and they felt that they could for this reason trust her husband. The envoys told him that a great tribe of the Tartars had made another campaign across the frontiers of Kin, and that the Emperor Ch'ang-Tsung had issued orders that the invaders

should be severely punished. The Tartars, however, after their manner, would vanish into the steppes as soon as the glorious soldiers of the Emperor appeared, and the object of their embassy to Togrul Khan was to request the Kerait ruler to bar their retreat.

Temuchin saw that this was a favourable opportunity, not only for taking vengeance upon the Tartars who had poisoned his father Yesukai, but also for emphasising his own importance as new Khan and the importance of the Mongols in the steppes. Instantly he sent one of his swift messengers to Togrul Khan, proposing that they should undertake a joint campaign; and he sent other messengers to trustworthy Mongolian tribes on the frontier, instructing them to penetrate the land of the Tartars in the guise of harmless nomads and to seek information about their strength and their camping-grounds.

Pursued by Chinese infantry, and subjected to surprise attacks by the Keraites and the Mongols, the Tartars were totally defeated. The loot they had carried off during their raid into Kin was seized by the Keraites and the Mongols—and it need hardly be said that these were by no means disposed to return the treasure to the Chinese. One curio which Temuchin sent back to his horde was something which had never before been seen in the steppes—a silver cradle with a gold-embroidered canopy.

But the most important thing for Temuchin was that the Mongolian tribes, being united, had under his leadership made common cause in a campaign, and had won a brilliant victory. Furthermore the Chinese general, who of course did not ask for the return of the conquered loot, reported his victory in China and mentioned that he had been helped by the nomads. As a reward, Emperor Ch'ang-Tsung appointed Togrul Wang-Khan—Prince Khan—; while the hitherto completely unknown Mongol chieftain of lesser note received the more modest title of Chao-churi—plenipotentiary against the rebels on the frontier (Anglice, Warden of the Marches). Such a distinction, which brought Temuchin more or less into contact with the almighty Emperor of Kin, could not fail to give him prestige in the steppes.

Thus under this title, Chao-churi, in the year 1194, the world-conqueror Jenghiz Khan appears for the first time in the annals of the Chinese Empire.

II

The Wang-Khan, as Togrul now liked to style himself, was exceedingly pleased with his adoptive son. Temuchin seized every opportunity of manifesting his devotion to the Khan of the Kerait. Together they celebrated their victory and their new dignities, Togrul becoming Temuchin's guest on the occasion. They went out hunting together in Temuchin's preserves, and the Mongols drove the best fur-bearing animals for the Kerait ruler to shoot, presenting him with the slaughtered game. The pair vowed eternal friendship and the best of understanding, swearing that if any cause of dispute between them should arise, they would believe no evil tongues, but discuss matters openly together and settle them amicably.

The Wang-Khan was quite in earnest with these friendly proposals.

Sacha-beki and his friend Daichu had not taken the field against the Tartars as Temuchin had ordered. "They wounded my half-brother Belgutei in my tent, and now they have refused to obey me when I ordered them into the field. Am I their Khan or am I not?" asked Temuchin of his adoptive father; and the Wang-Khan joined him in a punitive expedition. The two tribes were annihilated and the refractory chieftains killed.

The border tribe of the Naimans, a Turkish people in the West, had taken advantage of Togrul's absence to invade the land of the Kerait, so Temuchin hastened to help his adoptive father. They attacked and defeated the Naimans.

Soon all the nomadic people of the north and the west, of the east and the north-east, began to realise what this alliance signified for them. Year after year Togrul's army, accompanied by Temuchin, or else Temuchin's picked and well-trying troops accompanied by the Wang-Khan, took the field against some border

tribe, and resistance proved unavailing. Any who did not surrender unconditionally were defeated, plundered, driven into the forests or the desert. Their possessions, their flocks and herds, were divided among the conquerors.

Whereas, however, the Keraites made slaves of the prisoners, Temuchin picked out the best warriors and enlisted them in his army, marrying them off to Mongol girls, and giving them their share of booty in the next raid, so that his army grew with each fresh campaign and gained fighting strength.

So matters went on for six years. In the seventh, at length, the Year of the Hen, 1201, the princes of the larger nomadic tribes realised that for each of them it was only a question of time when the pair of Khans would attack them and subjugate them. Jamuga Sechen, above all, Temuchin's blood-brother, who since their parting twenty years before had jealously watched the rise of the friend of his youth, did not cease striving to form a counter-alliance. In time he assembled quite a number: Toto, the chieftain of the Merkits; the Barguts, the Seljuks, the Hatakits, the still unsubjugated Tartar tribes, the Jungirats who were especially alarmed at the thought of being vanquished by the comparatively uncultured Mongols. These were now ready to make common cause with Jamuga against the dangerous and ambitious Temuchin.

For they were agreed that he was the source of their troubles. Togrul had reigned for decades without ever dreaming of an attempt to enlarge the realm of the Keraites. They assembled, therefore, on the banks of the Argun, and swore the most binding oath known among the nomads.

Before the oath, with a sword they sacrificed a white stallion, a bull, a ram, and a hound, and then solemnly repeated after Jamuga the sentences of the pledge.

"O God, O Heaven, O Earth, creators of these beasts, hearken to our oaths. May that happen to us which has happened to these animals if we break our vow, and are false to the holy alliance we have now sworn."

Then, making for the lofty bank of the river, they felled the

trees that stood there and flung them down the escarpment; with their feet they kicked earth into the river, and said:

"Should there be one among us who is false to this oath, may his fate be that of this earth and these trees."

Thereupon they elected Jamuga Sechen as Gur Khan—the Khan of the Peoples—to lead them against the common foe. Jamuga had now to choose between taking the field at once against Temuchin or awaiting the arrival of his more distant allies—above all of Toto and some of the Jungirats. If he waited, he incurred the danger that his adversaries would collect their forces, whereas at this moment Togrul was hundreds of miles away at his main camp beside the Tula, while Temuchin, suspecting naught, was encamped on the banks of the Onon. He resolved, therefore, upon a lightning blow.

But, when choosing his allies, Jamuga had forgotten that Dai Sechen, Temuchin's father-in-law, was also one of the Jungirats; and even though his tribe had not turned up at the rendezvous beside the Argun, an invitation had been sent to him. Anticipating trouble, Dai Sechen promptly sent a warning to his son-in-law. Thereafter it was easy for Temuchin's spies to gather information, to learn where and for what purpose the hostile nomad tribes had got together.

When he was no more than half-way to the Onon, Jamuga unexpectedly came upon Temuchin's army, which occupied a carefully chosen position and was ready for battle. The issue was decided almost before a blow had been struck. Jamuga was defeated, and sought safety in flight.

Now the neighbouring territories lay open to Temuchin. But before starting on his campaign, wishing to consolidate his authority, he held a court of assize.

Before the battle he had issued orders which were subsequently adopted in his legal code, the *Yasak*:

"On the occasion of a victory, the enemy must be pursued with the utmost vigour, no thought of plunder hindering. After the battle, the booty will be justly allotted."

But his distinguished relatives, Altan, Kuchar, and Daaritai,

were far from being inclined to accept this new restriction of the sacred rights of the nomad to as much booty as he could get together. Were they to allow Temuchin to decide what their share should be? They were of nobler race than he, and not for that purpose had they made him Khan.

Directly the fate of the battle was settled, they made for Jamuga's camp, leaving the pursuit of the enemy to others.

Temuchin watched them at their work of rapine, and saw their defiant countenances when they knew themselves to be observed. He said not a word. He waited until his whole army returned from the pursuit. Then he commanded his warriors to surround his relatives and their train and to take away their loot, which was to be justly divided among the others. Altan, Kuchar, and Daaritai were not only deprived of any share, but were now, when Temuchin was setting out to subjugate neighbouring territories, sent home.

With suppressed wrath, the noblest of the Mongols had to put up with the slight, and in silence they left the army. Too late had they come to realise that the Khan they had elected was no modest steward of their interests, but a harsh and stern sovereign. The unruly, freedom-loving Mongol princes had no thought of bowing their necks beneath the yoke.

III

From people to people, from tribe to tribe, Temuchin the victorious overran the neighbouring lands with his army, recruiting new supporters with bow and sword. Only a few, now, ventured to resist. Those who could not find a refuge in the mountains or the forests, came bearing presents, announced their loyalty and devotion, paid fealty, and placed their best warriors at his disposal.

When in the west he was fighting against the Merkits, Togrul joined him; but when in the north and the east he conquered the Barguts, the Tartars, and the Jungirats, he was alone with his

Mongols. When it grew hot in the summer, he camped in the shadow of a forest-clad mountain. In winter, the severe winter of Mongolia, he sought more protected regions towards the south. If one of the shallow broad Mongolian rivers barred his path, thousands of horses, leashed together by the pommels of their saddles, were driven into the water, and the stream was crossed on horseback. Mutton and koumiss were to be obtained everywhere—so were women.

In the seasons of rest, swords were sharpened, new arrows were cut, and arrow-heads were forged. In summer the Mongol horses recovered from the campaign; in winter they found food for themselves by scraping away the snow with their hoofs. They knew as little of sheltered stables or of oats as their masters knew of stone houses and soft beds.

Where the Mongol camps, there is his home. Every day is fine, every evening is a festival. It is merry to eat and drink with friends and vassals; fine is the life of the warrior.

At about this date Temuchin asked his Orlok what was the greatest joy in human life. One after another answered: Hunting. One held that a drive was the best sport; another preferred hawking; a third liked best to lay low the wildest beasts. Man against beast of prey—that was the finest sport. But at each answer, Temuchin shook his head:

“The greatest joy a man can know is to conquer his enemies and drive them before him. To ride their horses and take away their possessions. To see the faces of those who were dear to them bedewed with tears, and to clasp their wives and daughters in his arms.”

Temuchin was now forty. During the last decade he had fought countless battles, and, in pursuit of his fixed aim, had overthrown all his adversaries. He had expanded his power as Khan, and consolidated it; and the name of the Mongols had been restored to honour in the steppes. His retainers had grown rich on the plunder he had won in his campaigns. Of his four sons, the three eldest, Juji, Jagatai, and Ogatai, went campaigning with him, while the youngest, Tuli, as custom prescribed, was “guardian of

the hearth"—that is to say, remained with his mother Bortei for the protection of the camp beside the Onon. Temuchin also had a daughter, and did not yet know to which prince he would give her in marriage. It must be one whose friendship was of importance to him. Meanwhile there were still a few tribes of whose attitude he was uncertain.

Then came a messenger from the Onon to Temuchin, with the following tidings:

"Your wife Bortei informs you that your princely children, the grandees and nobles of your realm, your distinguished people, are all well. The eagle nests on a lofty tree, but sometimes, while he trusts in the safety of this tree, the nest is plundered by a lesser bird, and eggs and young are devoured."

Temuchin instantly broke off his campaign, sent his chieftains and their tribes to their homes, and himself returned with his army to his horde beside the Onon.

But the nearer he drew to his home, the more reflective became Temuchin. At length he called a halt, and summoned his generals, his bold Orlok, to an important council in his tent.

Astonished were they when their mighty Khan, the conqueror of the nomad tribes, the man against whose word no one dared to offer the slightest resistance, the man who harshly and ruthlessly took vengeance on the disobedient, and from whose neighbourhood all foes fled, now expounded his trouble:

When they were riding through the land of the Merkits, and Toto, after his defeat, had taken refuge in the forest, one of the Merkit princes, in sign of subjugation, sent Temuchin his daughter, Kulan, and a tent of leopard-skins. So beautiful was the girl that Temuchin immediately took her to wife. But now, when he was on the way back to the horde, he had given the matter serious thought, and he expounded his concern in a lengthy oration.

"My first wife Bortei, to whom I was betrothed in early youth, is the wife and house-mother bestowed upon me by my noble father. In the field I took to myself Kulan. I now find it hard to present myself to Bortei who awaits me at home. It would be shameful, too, if our meeting in the presence of our newly

acquired subjects were to be unfriendly. One of you, then, my Orlok, speed in advance to my consort Bortei, and speak to her in my name."

The nine bold generals whose courage had been tested in dozens of battles regarded their Khan with no less embarrassment than he had shown in speaking to them, and not one volunteered to fulfil this honourable embassy; neither the faithful Jelmi, nor the dare-devil Jebei, nor the first vassal Bogurchi, nor yet Sorgan-Shira, the old man who had saved him and helped him to escape when he had been Targutai's prisoner. At length Mukuli, who had been the first to demand Temuchin's advancement to the position of Khan, declared himself ready to undertake the charge, and all breathed more freely.

The Mongolian Saga tells us how Mukuli, having reached the horde, bowed low before Bortei and sat down without a word. She asked, as custom prescribed, to be reassured as to the Khan's health, inquired how Mukuli was himself, wanted to be told of the welfare of her acquaintances in Temuchin's train, and at length, when there was nothing else to ask, she demanded why he had come.

Mukuli's commission must have lain heavy upon his soul, for he spoke unreservedly, without sparing his master in the least:

"He did not observe prescribed custom, nor did he behave as became a noble. He took delight in the motley colours of the tent of leopard skin, nor did he await nightfall, but, in defiance of the dictates of propriety, instantly took possession of Kulan on a couch."

Then, when Bortei made no answer, although she was now informed that Temuchin had not taken Kulan as he had taken so many captured princesses, merely as a concubine, but had made her his lawful wife, Mukuli thought it expedient to say something in excuse: "To rule over distant peoples, he took Kulan for wife. Yes, and our Khan sent me to tell you this," he concluded hesitatingly.

Still Bortei said not a word about these matters. She only wanted to know where Temuchin now was, and heard that the

Khan was a few days' ride distant with his whole army, and was awaiting her answer.

The answer was more gentle than Temuchin and Mukuli had expected:

"My will and the will of the people are subordinated to the power of our ruler," said the wise Bortei. "It is for the Khan to decide with whom he will enter into friendship or alliance. Among the reeds are many swans and geese, and my Lord will himself know how many arrows to discharge until his fingers are weary. Still, as the saying goes: 'Does an unbroken horse wish to be saddled? Does a man's first wife wish her husband to take a second? Too much is bad, but perhaps too little is worse.' " She reflected for a moment, and then said decisively: "I should prefer my Lord to build a new house for his new wife."

Temuchin was greatly relieved by this decision. For Kulan he provided a horde of her own, with tents, flocks and herds, and retainers; and, with a light heart, he now made for the Onon, where Kulan's horde was established beside that of Bortei.

Though in due time Temuchin took to himself many other wives, some of whom were distinguished Chinese and Persian princesses, he loved Kulan more than any of them. Although her tribe subsequently betrayed him, and he left no other Merkit alive, he spared her brother, and even made him commandant of part of his body-guard. When he conceived the suspicion that his own brother Kasar was casting sheep's eyes at Kulan, Temuchin was on the verge of slaying him. Kulan was the only one of his wives whom he took with him in his campaign for the conquest of the Khwarizmian Empire, the only one who was allowed to visit distant lands. Nevertheless, when he was crowned as Khakan, Temuchin had only Bortei seated by his side. Bortei's sons alone inherited his world empire, and only their offspring might be chosen Great Khans. Even though he doubted whether Juji was his own son, Juji's children ruled over a quarter of the world, whereas the children and grandchildren of Kulan disappeared among the ruck of the Mongols. None but Bortei was, as tradition prescribed, "the wife and mother bestowed on me by my noble father."

CHAPTER IV

DANGER THREATENS

I

BORTEI saw that dangers were threatening in the west. Togrul's son Sengun had a new friend, Jamuga, who had taken refuge with the Keraites after his defeat. The two young men were always together, hatching trouble of some sort. Sengun had ever been opposed to Togrul's friendship with Temuchin. The chieftain of the Mongols aspired too high. Now Sengun became a rallying centre for Temuchin's enemies, and received with open arms those malcontent relatives whom Temuchin had disciplined—such as Altan, Kuchar, and Daaritai. With all their kin, they had betaken themselves to the land of the Keraites and sworn fealty to the Wang-Khan. Now they were among the most trusted of the latter's retainers. Such was Bortei's report. Did it not bode mischief?

Temuchin tried to reassure her, explaining that he and the Wang-Khan had solemnly agreed to disregard evil reports of one another, and to settle disputes amicably. Their friendship had lasted many years.

But Bortei reminded her husband that the Wang-Khan had deserted him once before, in the middle of the night, before the battle with the Naimans; and, on another occasion, had not sent him his due share of the booty. No doubt, afterwards, Togrul had confessed himself remorseful, but only because the Naimans had attacked him instead of Temuchin. In like manner he had been friendly the next time trouble loomed because his own brothers had risen in revolt against him, and he needed Temuchin's help. Now there was peace in the land of the Keraites, their enemies had been overthrown, and Bortei was anxious as to what might happen.

Temuchin discussed matters with her for a long time, and then he sent emissaries to Togrul, asking the Wang-Khan's daughter in marriage for his eldest son Juji. At the same time they were to offer his own daughter as wife for one of Togrul's grandsons.

This was an unwise diplomatic move. It was the very thing which Sengun needed that he might sow suspicion of Temuchin in his father's mind:

"Now you can see what Temuchin is aiming at—the throne of the Keraites. As soon as you die, Father, he will claim the heritage for Juji. That is why he sends to the Keraites more than their due share of the spoils. Such has always been his cunning way of winning supporters. This Mongol suffers from crazy ambition. Is it not the presumption of a lunatic to make him demand the daughter of the Wang-Khan for Juji, who is probably not Temuchin's real son? You will do well to cut the claws of this upstart before he grows dangerous."

Vainly did Togrul try to disregard these whisperings. Vainly did he insist that nothing but good had come to him from Temuchin, that he had always found Temuchin magnanimous and respectful.

"My hair is white, I'm an old man. Let me die in peace." Thus did he answer his son's incitations.

But Sengun, backed up by Jamuga, continually found new grounds for suspicion.

Of course Temuchin was forthcoming and respectful towards the ruler of the Keraites. He needed Togrul's help. It was they, and they only, who had made him great. But how did he behave in other respects? When Bortei was carried off by the Merkits, did not Jamuga help him, and protect him from the Taijiuts? Yet Temuchin had not been ashamed to show his envy of Jamuga merely because Jamuga had been appointed Gur Khan, receiving a higher title than Temuchin's own. How had he treated the noble Mongols who, renouncing their own privileges, had elected him Khan? He had murdered his relatives, Targutai and Sacha-beki. What about his treatment of Altan, Kuchar, and Daaritai? Only through flight had they escaped a like fate.

Temuchin, otherwise so free-handed, had grudged them a little loot. His apparent magnanimity was but craft, and with it he had won too many adherents among the Keraites. Directly Togrul died, he would begin a perennial feud, turning to account the disputes among the various clans. It was Togrul's duty as ruler, instead of thinking of his old age and of the need for repose, to see to the safety and continuance of his realm.

In the long run, the old Khan of the Keraites could not withstand these intrigues. After all, he thought, his son might be right. Perhaps Temuchin's claws ought to be cut, while he, Togrul, was still alive, and, as Wang-Khan, possessed the requisite authority. He knew his son Sengun, knew him to be suspicious and cruel, and knew that the subordinate chieftains would not readily obey such a ruler. What would happen if, on the frontier, there was so mighty and ambitious a Khan as Temuchin?

"All right, do as you please," he decided in the end. "But I will take no part in it."

This reluctant permission was enough for Sengun. He sent envoys to the Mongol ruler, saying that Temuchin had better come in person to discuss the details of the betrothals—and meanwhile he began to gather the tribes of the Keraites. Temuchin was to be poisoned at the festival of welcome, and the Khan's death was to be immediately followed by an invasion of the land of the Mongols, before the Orlok could begin a campaign for vengeance.

Temuchin actually started for the land of the Keraites, but on the way visited the horde of his mother Yulun-Eke and his stepfather Munlik, where he received warning after warning. Did he really believe that his enemies had forgathered at Sengun's simply in order to take part in the betrothal celebrations? Yulun-Eke was able to report so many of the crafty ways by which, on the steppes, people had been wont to rid themselves of a dangerous rival—by poison, by a pitfall beneath the seat, and what not. She strongly suspected a trap. At length Temuchin decided not to visit the Keraites himself, but merely to send messengers with further proposals, and he returned to his own horde.

It was plain that Temuchin did not trust Togrul's friendship, and Sengun was able to convince his father that only one course was now possible, immediate action, forestalling the Khan of the Mongols. Luckily the Kerait forces were already assembled, so thereupon the Wang-Khan, with his retainers and his whole army, marched eastward.

The onslaught took Temuchin completely by surprise. When two herdsmen from the frontier reported the advance of the Khan of the Kerait, he had with him only the warriors of his own horde, his standing army of 4,600 men, and with these soldiers were their wives, their possessions, their flocks and herds. It was too late to evade battle. That night the attack of the Kerait was to be expected.

Immediately swift messengers were sent in all directions to the nearest Mongol tribes, commanding them to make ready instantly and hasten to the Khan's horde. Meanwhile the cattle and horses were driven out into the steppes, women and children and the most important utensils and treasures were laden upon camels and in carts and sent away. Temuchin himself, accompanied by the men fit to bear arms, retreated a half day's march, to a mountainous spot where he would be able to make a good defence. The camp was left as it was, and Jelmi with a small section remained behind to light the camp fires at nightfall and then hasten to rejoin the main body.

The Kerait, who had often enough seen Temuchin's shock troops in battle, were not inclined to begin the combat heedlessly, but they hoped to take the enemy so completely by surprise that he would have no time to array for battle and offer effective resistance.

After they had watched the lighting of the camp fires, they waited for a considerable time, then surrounded the camp at a distance, and approached with due caution. At length, on the signal being given by trumpet-blasts, uttering loud yells they charged from every direction upon the tents, hoping to cut down newly awakened and confused foes—to find that they were raiding an abandoned camp.

Nevertheless the aspect of the camp suggested a hurried flight. Cutlery, eating utensils, and the remnants of meals were scattered about the place. The Mongols, thought the Kerait, must have detected the approaching encirclement, and instantly escaped. Laden with women, children, and live-stock, they would not be able to fight effectively, so, in the darkness, the Kerait set out in pursuit.

Temuchin, meanwhile, had had plenty of time to make his preparations for the battle, allotting an appropriate task to each section of his forces. By the time Togrul, with the main body, got in touch with the enemy, his advance-guard had already been scattered. The hilly ground hindered the onslaught, the position having been so skilfully chosen that the Kerait army could not develop its strength properly. Nevertheless, though the Mongols observed an iron discipline, though they were valiant and steadfast, they were greatly outnumbered, and Temuchin's warriors began to give ground.

Temuchin had kept some of his best men in reserve, hoping to turn the enemy's flank. No doubt it was a desperate measure, this partition of an army already much inferior in strength, and the hope with so small a force as his reserve to drive a wedge into the main body of the Kerait—but he succeeded. At the last moment his tribal banner appeared among the hills to the rear of the Kerait. The Wang-Khan had now to fight on two fronts. The little troop of Mongols held the hill with overwhelming courage against all attacks, and when Sengun was wounded by an arrow Togrul realised that the battle could not be decided that evening, so he sounded a retreat, and occupied a camp behind the hill where the Mongol reserves were placed.

He had no reason to fear attack, for Temuchin's army was utterly exhausted. Many of the Mongol Khan's best warriors were dead, and many of the generals wounded. Two of the Orlok, Temuchin's first vassal Bogurchi and the latter's friend Boro-Kula were missing, and so was Temuchin's third son, young Ogatai.

When the Mongols reported their disappearance to the Khan,

he did not change countenance, but only said: "They liked always to be together; now they have died together, for they did not wish to separate."

But after a while, Bogurchi turned up safe and sound; then Boro-Kula appeared, his face smeared with blood, for he had sucked an arrow-wound received by Ogatai, who dangled in front of him unconscious across the saddle.

At this sight, Temuchin's eyes filled with tears. Still, he would not leave the battlefield, commanding only that the wounded should be carried out of danger.

Did he hope, next morning, with ranks so thinned, to resume the struggle? That could have led to nothing but his final destruction. Only retreat, a hasty retreat to evade pursuit, could save the Mongols. Had the first defeat of his life so completely confused his judgment?

But when his retainers urged him to issue orders for retreat, he merely shook his head. No, he would not move until the men who had occupied the hill in the rear of Togrul's army came back to him. Should he prematurely withdraw, they would be lost, and he preferred to face the danger of complete annihilation to abandoning the loyal followers in order to save his own skin. Not until the last man of those who had outflanked the enemy returned to him did he sound the retreat. Then, indeed, he pitilessly urged his exhausted warriors onward at the utmost speed their horses could make.

At a later date, when Temuchin had become lord "of all the peoples dwelling in felt-tents", whom he had united into one armed nation, he gave this obligation of comradeship in extremity the force of law. The smallest unit of his armies, consisting of nine men with a tenth in command, was composed of persons bound together for life or for death. They must allow themselves to be cut to pieces rather than abandon one of them who was wounded. He who forsook a comrade would ruthlessly be put to death.

II

Notwithstanding the strenuous resistance of the Mongols, and although the Keraites had been the first to abandon the field of battle, the issue of the encounter was unmistakable. Temuchin had been beaten.

The consequences were immediate. The tribes he had summoned to his aid, the clans which should have gathered, failed to come.

His vassals unanimously declared that he had exceeded his rights as Khan. It was not within his competence to issue such commands by messenger. The decision of war or peace must be a joint matter. They had only sworn fealty to him in a war decided upon by common agreement. Why should these nomad chieftains now make war? In Temuchin's countless campaigns they had collected more booty than ever before; they had enough women, slaves, cattle; they were established upon fat pastures. Why should they abandon these good things in order to seek new troubles and fresh dangers? If they stayed quietly where they were, no harm could come to them; but if, on the other hand, they rallied to the support of Temuchin, there could be no doubt that Togrul, his enemy, would take vengeance upon their wives and children, would drive off their herds and plunder their goods. This war was Temuchin's private affair, and if Temuchin was defeated—well, then they would be free chieftains once more, and would hesitate a long while before selecting a new Khan.

For Temuchin and his followers this was a terrible retreat. They could not count upon support or help from anyone; they had to avoid the much-peopled and rich pastures, to shun the good roads, lest they should betray their whereabouts. They sought barren regions, where man and beast had to quench their thirst with befouled water from clay puddles; and, during this retreat, the few clans that had remained true to him now forsook him, lacking strength for continued resistance.

But Temuchin and the last of those who remained loyal to

him decided to share good and evil together, and never to forsake one another. Beside the stinking, muddy water they mutually pledged one another, swearing that anyone who should break the oath should become like this water. It was now that Temuchin instituted the order of the Ter Khans, who, for all time, would be freed from dues to the supreme Khan, and would have unhindered access to his tent. They would have the right to keep to themselves the booty they had taken in battle. Nine times could a Ter Khan go unpunished for offences that were usually considered capital. Temuchin invested his loyal remnant with this dignity.

Then he moved farther and yet farther eastward, pursued by the Kerait army.

During the retreat, the red lock that hung across Temuchin's forehead turned white. When his Orlok saw this, they asked, in amazement, why should his hair turn white, since he was as yet nowhere near the beginning of old age. Without pausing for reflection, he answered:

"Since Heaven designed me to become a ruler, Heaven now gives me this token of age, which is a token of dignity."

He took counsel with no one, nor discussed the situation with any. Acting on his own initiative, he sent messengers to Togrul, who were to remind the Kerait Khan of the services Temuchin had performed and the help he had given Togrul, and to remind him also of the solemn agreement that neither would believe evil of the other, and that in case of dispute they should discuss matters in a friendly spirit. The messengers had to commit the words to heart, that they might repeat them exactly:

"O Khan, my father, why did you grow angry against me and bring fear upon me? If I have broken any agreement made with you then you can remonstrate with me in a good spirit, and do not need to destroy my land and my possessions. . . . Why should you fear me? Why, instead of enjoying rest and comfort do you levy war against me?

"O Khan, my father, for the sake of good peace send envoys to me. My blood-brother Sengun and my blood-brother Jamuga,

and my relatives, and all others, should each send an envoy to me, that we may discuss our differences."

To Altan, Kuchar, and Daaritai, likewise, he sent messengers urging them to remember the fact that he had offered all of them the dignity of Khan. They had refused this dignity, and had appointed him Khan, and he recalled to them their oath. He was confident that he had harboured no evil against them, for he had fulfilled every duty he had sworn to undertake, had led them to victory over their enemies, had organised hunts, and driven game for them. It was they, not he, who had failed to tender the obedience they had sworn in case of war.—But he harboured no grudge against them. Let them send envoys to him, to discuss terms of peace.

The answer was crushing. Sengun replied for them all. The answer was: "War."

Temuchin's position was desperate. He had to evacuate the whole of his territory in face of Togrul, and moved continually farther and farther to the east, until, near the frontier of Manchuria, among the salt marshes surrounding Lake Baljun, he succeeded in evading pursuit.

Here he found help. The tribes of the east, alarmed by the news of the devastation wrought by Togrul in the territories through which he passed, joined forces with Temuchin. He was also joined by warriors from the clans which had fled before the Keraites.

At length, surprisingly enough, Temuchin's uncle Daaritai came to his aid, having abandoned the Wang-Khan.

Something important must have happened to account for this desertion.

From information brought by Daaritai, and from that given by Daaritai's retainers, Temuchin was soon able to form a picture of the latest happenings in the camp of the Keraites. Togrul had shown himself too autocratic in his dealings with the Mongol princes, with Jamuga and some of his other vassals, ordering them about, and not giving them a sufficient share of the spoils. Temuchin, they thought, was definitively beaten, and

would no longer be a danger. They had therefore decided to seize and slay Togrul, and resume the life of free, independent princes. But their plan was betrayed. Togrul, turning the tables on them, attacked them, plundered them, and threatened them with severe punishment. Altan, Kuchar, and Jamuga escaped to the west, to the country of the Naimans, while Daaritai, reassured by the tenor of Temuchin's last embassy, had come to join his nephew.

But even after the secession of the above-mentioned chieftains, the Wang-Khan was still too strong for Temuchin to defeat in open battle. The Mongol Khan therefore waited for reinforcements he expected from his brother Kasar, who was on the way with a whole horde. But the Wang-Khan's army attacked Kasar and his men, inflicting an overwhelming defeat.

When Kasar at length turned up, exhausted, half starving, accompanied by the few who had managed to make good their flight, Temuchin decided to act at all costs. It was now late autumn, and he did not feel that in his present camp it would be possible to endure the hardships of the Mongolian winter. He would therefore employ a ruse. Two of his brother's companions, trustworthy men, though hungry and tired, were, on their exhausted steeds, to ride to Togrul and, in Kasar's name, offer submission. Their own state would be sufficient proof of their lord's desperate situation. Temuchin, they were to say, to whom Kasar wanted to flee, was nowhere to be found.

Togrul had no reason for doubting the genuineness of this information. He knew the two men, who were old acquaintances in earlier campaigns. Kasar would surely not venture upon any trick, since his wives and children, his tents and horses, were safe under Togrul's thumb. The latter's own spies confirmed the information that Temuchin's whereabouts was undiscoverable. But if Temuchin's own brother Kasar should join forces with Togrul, would not that be a warning to the last of the Mongols who remained true to their youthful Khan?

Togrul therefore swore over a horn into which he had poured a few drops of blood, that he would do no harm to Kasar, and

would accept him as a vassal. Then, together with the messengers, he sent an envoy to Kasar, before whom Temuchin's brother was also to shed a drop or two of his blood into the horn, and over it swear fealty to his new lord.

Meanwhile the Keraites began preparations for a great festival upon the reception of the new vassal—as a sign of their definitive victory over the Mongols.

The envoy was not a little astonished when he was brought before Temuchin instead of before Kasar. The Mongol Khan did not trouble him with many questions. Instantly the troops were summoned and Temuchin set forth to ride by day and by night. What he wanted to know about the Keraites he could learn on the way from the retainers of Kasar who had been sent to Togrul. They must serve as guides.

The unsuspecting and unprepared army of the Wang-Khan was attacked by surprise in the camp already adorned for the festival. It was one of those battles which decided at a single blow the fate of the loosely aggregated realm of nomads. Every attempt at resistance was instantly frustrated by the madly riding Mongols. To escape being cut to pieces, whole divisions went over to the attacking party. Togrul and his son Sengun saved themselves by flight, and their army was scattered.

At one stroke, Temuchin, yesterday still a fugitive driven to the uttermost bourne of his realm, had become, not merely lord again over his own territory, but found himself with the realm of the Keraites defenceless at his feet. What did it matter to him that, together with the goods which had been taken from himself, he now secured all the possession which the enemy had brought on the campaign? He distributed the lot among his faithful adherents. They could glut themselves with it; the only thing he grudged them was rest. Without pause he pursued the foe.

Sengun made for the west, where the Uighurs dwelt—a people of Turkish stock, but with a strong dash of Indo-Germanic elements. In earlier centuries they had ruled over all Mongolia and part of Turkestan, treating with the emperors

of China almost as equals. Then, having been defeated by freshly arrived nomads and driven into Central Asia, they ultimately became vassals of the Emperor of Kara-Khitai; and, though politically impotent, they maintained their cultural importance among the surrounding warrior States. Their language was the *lingua franca* of Central Asia, and they had a writing of their own. In their country there were wealthy commercial cities, as well as agriculture. Sengun, who, with his nomad train, began to carry off the herds of the peaceful peasants, was to be soon effectively opposed, taken prisoner, and executed.

Togrul fled north-westward to the land of the Naimans, neighbours of the Uighurs and their sometime enemies, fell into the hands of two chieftains whom years before he had plundered in a surprise raid, and was killed by them. In the hope of reward, they sent his head to the Khan of the Naimans, Baibuka Tayan—to receive, instead, a sharp reproof, for they were told that the Wang-Khan ought to have been handed over alive.

III

The land of the Naimans, for the most part mountainous, extending through the whole region of the Altai Range, was ruled by two brothers: the west, Great Altai proper, with its outskirts, being under the sway of Buiruk Khan; and the eastern part under Baibuka Tayan. Their father, who had ruled the country before its division, had, by his conquests, made it the mightiest among the nomadic realms. After his death, its division between his two sons weakened it so much that the Keraites were sometimes a menace to Baibuka Tayan; but now, when the chances of war and victory enabled Temuchin to extend his dominions to the borders of the Naiman country, the presence of Togrul at Baibuka Tayan's court would have been welcome to the latter. He could have used Togrul to hold the Mongol Khan in check, and, in case of need, could have harassed Temuchin

by fomenting revolts among the Keraites—for this new neighbour, as Jamuga and Temuchin's cousins were always ready to testify, was a troublesome fellow.

But Togrul was dead, so the best must be made of a bad job. Baibuka had the late Wang-Khan's head set in silver and fixed to the back of his throne with the face towards the east, as a sign that he, Baibuka, would not forget the land of the Keraites. At the same time he sent a message to Alakush Tekin, the Khan of the Onguts.

The Onguts, like the Naimans, stood at a comparatively high level of civilisation. The Naimans, being settled far to the west, were under the influence of the Uighurs and the Kara-Khitans; while the Onguts, who dwelt south-east of the Gobi Desert, were on the borders of China. Between them lay the whole of Mongolia, in which Temuchin's will now prevailed without check. Still, Baibuka's letter showed what Temuchin's neighbours still thought of the upstart Khan of the Mongols:

"We learn that in our neighbourhood a man has appeared styling himself 'Khan of the Mongols', with his eyes fixed on the heavens, hoping to subjugate the sun and the moon. But just as little as a man can put two swords in one scabbard or two souls in the same body, just so little can there be two rulers in the same realm, so I beg you to become my right hand and to help me take away his bow and arrows."

But the interests of the Onguts were not the same as those of the Naimans. To the Onguts, a firmly organised State under Temuchin seemed far more desirable than a chaos of innumerable tribes and clans to which the richer settlements always offered the lure of plunder. Besides, whenever any such nomadic band made a raid into Kin, they laid the Ongut country waste on the way; and when the Chinese retaliated with punitive expeditions, it was the Onguts once more who bore the first brunt. Naturally, therefore, it seemed better to them that these undisciplined hordes should be bridled and bitted by a strict ruler, with whom, in case of need, they could come to an understanding.

That is why the Khan of the Onguts, instead of going to

the help of the Khan of the Naimans, sent envoys to Temuchin informing the latter of the plans of Baibuka Tayan.

Temuchin had devoted the winter after his victory over Togrul to the re-establishment of his disorganised forces. The rebellious chieftains were swept away; each tribe that was subjugated had to accept instructors who divided the territory and its inhabitants by the sacred figure of nine. Over the inhabitants of nine tents a headman of the same stock was placed; nine of these headmen, in their turn, were subordinate to a tenth, who, of course, also had ten tents of his own, so that in sum he held sway over one hundred tents. Thus there came into Jenghiz Khan's organisation the decimal system, though based ostensibly upon the sacred figure of nine.

Although by these measures Temuchin saw to it that subordinate tribes should at any moment be ready for war, he no longer thought of declaring war without consulting his subordinates. The lessons of the campaign against Togrul, in which the chieftains had suddenly renounced their allegiance, were still recent. Everything should now be carried out in accordance with law and custom.

He summoned a kuriltai—a great council—at which all the chieftains must appear, and reported to them the intention of the Naimans and the warning of the Onguts.

He secured the vote he expected. It was agreed that a new war was inevitable; but the chieftains had no inclination to begin it forthwith. Now, in the springtime, the horses were too weak after the lean fare of winter; they must be fattened on the fresh pastures to give them new strength, for to expose them at present to the hardships of a campaign would be their ruin. It would be better to wait until the summer, and better still until the autumn.

Temuchin, when summoning the kuriltai, had foreseen these objections, and though, in accordance with law and custom, he allowed the assembly of the nobles to decide, he had no inclination to have his hands tied by their wishes. At the pre-arranged moment, his half-brother Belgutei intervened, saying

that a surprise attack was of more importance than fresh horses. Temuchin's brothers and his uncle Daaritai (who wanted to atone for backsliding) expressed the same view—and since these with Munlik, the Orlok, and the Ter Khans were in a majority, the opponents were outvoted. It was decided that the war should begin immediately.

Temuchin hoped that, as usual, he would be able to decide the place of encounter. He chose a richly pastured plain on the borders of the Naiman realm, and waited there for Baibuka Tayan.

This time, however, he had to do, not with undisciplined tribes, but with an organised army. Meanwhile Baibuka Tayan had taken up his position in the mountains, where he waited patiently for Temuchin. Under his banner there were 80,000 men, including, besides the Naiman forces, Merkits, Tartars, the dispersed remnants of the Keraites, Jamuga and his warriors.

As soon as Temuchin saw that his adversary was not willing to fight at the place he himself had chosen, he changed his plan of campaign. The advance-guard of the Mongols, under the command of Jebei, was sent into the land of the Naimans, while he himself, with the main body, slowly followed, ready for battle at any moment. The advance-guard was instructed to retreat at the first sign of serious resistance.

When the Naimans perceived, or at any rate fancied, that the enemy was disinclined for combat, and when they saw how weak and thin were the Mongols' horses, they urged their Khan to force a decision. Baibuka Tayan had intended to retreat farther into the mountains, luring the Mongols after him, and weakening their horses yet more by over-exertion. But his army was not so rigidly disciplined as Temuchin's. His generals had no inclination for such tactics as a retreat before a weaker and badly equipped enemy. They accused their Khan of cowardice. "Under your father's sway, the enemy never saw our backs," they exclaimed, and advised him to consort with his women while they themselves defeated the Mongols. They boasted: "We will drive them before us like wethers and ewes, so that not a hoof or horn of them shall remain."

Angry and mortified, Baibuka Tayan ordered the advance.

He encountered Temuchin's army when it was already in battle formation, the centre, which would receive the main attack, being under Kasar's command. Temuchin himself led the troops destined for flanking movements and counter-attacks, since the manipulation of these needed especial caution in such difficult country.

Concerning this battle we have the account of a poetic chronicler. He describes how Baibuka Tayan, with Jamuga beside him, watched the development of the struggle, and how Baibuka, much concerned, asked:

"Who are these men that follow ours as wolves pursue sheep into the fold?"

Jamuga answered:

"They are the four hounds of my blood-brother Temuchin, fed on human flesh. He holds them on an iron chain. These hounds have skulls of brass, their teeth are hewn from rock, their tongues are shaped like awls, their hearts are of iron. In place of horsewhips, they carry curved swords. They drink the dew and ride upon the wind. In battle they feed on human flesh. Now they are loosened from the chain. Their spittle runs, they are full of joy. These four hounds are Jebei, Bogurchi, Jelmi, and Sabutai."

Once more Baibuka Tayan asked:

"Who is that behind, like a hungry kite straining forward?"

Jamuga replied:

"That is Temuchin, my blood-brother. He is armed cap-à-pie in iron armour, and has flown hither like a hungry kite. Do you see him storming forward? Your generals said that as soon as the Mongols appeared they would be scattered like sheep, leaving neither hoof nor horn. Look now!"

Jamuga and Baibuka and all the Naimans are said to have performed prodigies of valour, but when the victory of the Mongols became inevitable, Jamuga and his retainers retreated. Baibuka Tayan went on fighting to the last, and after he had fallen his generals continued the struggle. Not until their other

allies, among them Toto and the Merkits, fled, did the Naimans' army break up hopelessly.

- With the same resolution with which Temuchin, at the outset of the campaign, had modified his plans to suit altered circumstances, did he now change his behaviour towards the vanquished. He forbade his warriors to plunder the Naimans, and not one of the prisoners made from among the chieftains and generals was slain. He had their arms restored to them and requested them to serve him as faithfully as they had served their dead ruler. He took Baibuka's widow to wife, married his youngest son Tuli to a Naiman princess, and did his utmost to effect a mingling of the two peoples and to induce his Mongols to adopt the culture of the Naimans, which was undoubtedly at the highest level yet attained by any nomads.

Thus the Saga relates that, shortly after the battle, the Mongols took prisoner a richly clad but unarmed man, who had some strange object in his hand. Brought before Temuchin, he declared that he was Tatatungo, a man of Uighur birth, who had served Baibuka Tayan as prime minister. The thing he carried in his hand was his sovereign's seal. He made Temuchin acquainted with the use of the seal, and with the significance of the Uighur characters with which it was graven; and Temuchin, the barbarian, whose people had hitherto known nothing of written characters, immediately recognised their value and importance. The man who himself could neither read nor write appointed Tatatungo his Keeper of the Seal, and charged him to instruct his (Temuchin's) sons and the children of the Orlok in reading and writing.

Thus the Uighur writing became the official script of the Mongols, and remained so when Temuchin later came into close contact with Chinese and with Islamic culture. Although he appointed certain Chinese and Mohammedans to the highest positions in his service, he personally rejected both Chinese and Mohammedan civilisation. He regarded them as unduly urban, as softening in their effects, as foreign—whereas to him the Uighurs were akin, being themselves archetypal nomads.

IV

The clemency Temuchin showed towards the Naimans was not henceforward to characterise his rule. With other opponents he was ruthless.

He dispatched Juji and some of the Orlok against the last refractory Tartar clans, and therewith came the first clash between father and son, for Juji, who loved his Tartar wife, wanted to spare this enemy, and only upon his father's stern insistence undertook the task of finally breaking their power and incorporating the remnant in his own army.

Toto, with the Merkits, escaped into the depth of the forest and thus saved himself from the pursuers.

Guchluk, son of Baibuka Tayan, who had been the first to join Toto, fled afterwards into the Altai Mountains to his uncle Buiruk Khan.

Altan and Kuchar, Temuchin's two rebellious relatives, were caught and executed.

At length Jamuga, too, met his fate. Chased hither and thither, his clansmen decided to save themselves by treason, and handed him over to Temuchin's warriors. When Temuchin learned how it was that Jamuga had been taken, he ordered that the clan should be exterminated to the last man and child. "How can we leave alive and how can we trust those who have betrayed their own lord?" he indignantly exclaimed. But he did not shed the blood of his blood-brother. He had Jamuga put to death in a way which did not involve bloodshed, for according to the Mongol belief the soul is in the blood.

CHAPTER V

JENGHIZ KHAN OF KHANS

I

IN the Year of the Panther (1206), the general stationed on the Great Wall of China, who bore the title of Guardian of the Western Frontier, reported to his Emperor that all was quiet in distant lands.

This news was so unusual, and therefore so exciting, that Ch'ang Tsung, the old Emperor, who had been on the throne for seventeen years, immediately had his thoughts turned towards the Chao-churi, the Warden of the Marches, and wondered why this Warden had forgotten to send the promised tribute. Forthwith the Emperor dispatched his nephew, Prince Yuen-chi, into "the distant lands" to remind the Chao-churi of his obligations.

Prince Yuen-chi, on his way, encountered delegations from all the peoples and the tribes that dwelt "beyond the frontiers", and these delegations had the same objective for their journey as Yuen-chi himself. They were making for the water-parting region of Delugun Boldok which is the source of the Onon. Here was established Temuchin's horde, an enormous city of tents, in which was stored an abundance of valuable spoils—a place humming like an ant-heap. For days before their arrival, the emissaries were riding through abundant troops of horses, huge herds of cattle, with thousands of men milking the mares and preparing koumiss. Thousands of women were milking the cows and making arjka, a sort of brandy distilled from fermented milk.

Although Temuchin seemed much occupied, he at once received the prince from China, though without showing him

the honour which the envoy regarded as his due. Nevertheless the Khan gave Yuen-chi the customary presents to take to the Emperor. But this happened with such unusual speed, and the horses and camels were ready saddled and laden with hides and furs, so that the bustle seemed a breach of good manners, as if there was a desire to speed the unbidden guest. Still, Yuen-chi had time enough to find out that a great kuriltai "of all the peoples dwelling in felt huts" was taking place, and that Temuchin was to be elected Khakan—Khan of Khans, Ruler of Rulers.

Yuen-chi hastened back to China and informed his Emperor of this dangerous move towards uniting the nomadic peoples. It was an obvious threat to China. Again and again, the nomads, as soon as their quarrels came to an end, had seized the first opportunity of invading China. It was essential, said Prince Yuen-chi, promptly to make ready a gigantic army, taking time by the forelock, and if necessary waging war against Temuchin.

But Emperor Ch'ang Tsung was too old for so uncertain an adventure. Besides, Temuchin bore the title of a Chinese official; he had paid up his tribute; and though his manners did not accord with court etiquette and his treatment of a prince of the blood royal might seem like an affront, nevertheless, his forces were on the other side of the Gobi Desert, while between lay the Onguts and the Great Wall. Of course the Emperor recognised that henceforward it would be necessary to pay closer attention to what these people "in distant lands" might be doing, and he had a warning note made in the Imperial Annals: "The Mongol Temuchin of the race of the Kiuts has, on the banks of the River Onon, declared himself Khakan." Thus, after twelve years' interval, did the name of Jenghiz Khan appear for a second time in the Chinese chronicles.

Meanwhile the kuriltai had been held with all conceivable splendour. In the middle of the horde a gigantic white marquee was erected, decked within with brocades. The wooden pillars bearing the roof were richly covered with gold plates. In front of the entrance to the marquee waved, on one side, the white standard of the Borjigin, decorated with the falcon and the

raven, bearing nine points, attached to each point a long-haired white yak-tail, the emblem of power. These nine yak-tails symbolised the nine Orlok, Temuchin's generals. On the other side of the entry stood the fighting emblem of the Khan, crowned by yak horns and bearing four black horse-tails.

The space in front of the tent was, as far as one could see, unoccupied. Ever since the Mongols, wherever they have been, have established their hordes in such a way that in front of their prince's tent, which was always directed towards the south, the space was unoccupied, and the camp extended to right and to left, often for miles; while behind the tent of the Khan stood, in due order of rank, the tents of the chieftains, the army commanders, the dignitaries, and the tents of their wives, each having its own greater or lesser state, its own retainers and servants. On the free space in front of the tent assembled all the relatives of the Khan, all his army commanders and chieftains, calling loudly for Temuchin. As soon as he appeared, the Shaman Gokchu-Teb-Tengri (Gokchu the Trusted of Heaven), the son of Munlik who seventeen years before had announced Temuchin's mission as Khan, now declared that the Eternal Blue Heaven had commanded him to tell the people of the Mongols that Temuchin was divinely appointed to rule all nations and to bear the name of Jenghiz Khakan.

Gokchu's sanctity had grown with the years. All knew that he was wont to ride a white horse into the skies, in order to hold converse with spirits; that he felt neither hunger nor cold; that he could fast unendingly and sit naked in the snow until from the warmth of his body it was converted into steam. Fulfilling the wish of Heaven, everyone cried with him to Temuchin: "We wish, we beg, and we command that you shall become Lord and Ruler over us all!"

The Khan's relatives and the other princes spread a sheet of black felt on the ground, made Temuchin take his seat upon it, and then lifted it by the corners and, amid the acclamations of the assembly, set him upon the throne.

The people already knew Khans and Gur Khans—but a

Khakan, a Khan of Khans, a ruler of rulers, was something new among the present generation of nomadic peoples. Nor was there any precedent for the name Jenghiz which, upon the unanimous demand of the notables, he now adopted. It must be of divine origin, for it sounded fine and warlike, resembling the words to denote "great", "unflinching", "invincible". Their Khakan deserved it as did no other mortal.

Temuchin, who was now forty-four years old, had long since ceased to be the man who, a decade and a half before, had modestly recommended some of his most distinguished relatives to assume the title of Khan. Although, at that time, the kuriltai had really elected him to power, now all the nobles knew that they had merely been summoned to proclaim their ruler Khakan, thus publicly confirming an already accomplished fact. Temuchin, indeed, ever since he had been forsaken by his vassals on the occasion of his struggle against the Wang-Khan, had felt it important to show that his power and his orders were strictly legitimate. In face of the assembled people he asked them:

"If you wish me to be your ruler, are you without exception ready and resolved to fulfil all my behests; to come when I summon you, to go whithersoever I may send you; and to put to death whomsoever I may indicate?"

The Khakan was the ruler of the rulers. He issued instructions to the subordinate Khans, to the Orlok, to the Noyons (the seigneurs), the Beys—in a word to the chieftains, whatever title they might bear—and they commanded their subordinates in his name; and so on throughout the various grades of authority down to the common people. In Temuchin's realm there was a strict order of precedence, and the "rulers" now loudly proclaimed to their ruler their willingness to obey his every ordinance.

Temuchin replied:

"Henceforward, then, my simple word shall be my sword."

Before him they fell on their knees and paid him homage, each of them making obeisance four times. Then, rising to their

feet, they lifted the throne upon which he was seated on to their shoulders and carried him round the open space, while the assembled crowd kneeled.

Now began a festival "such as had never before been witnessed among the people dwelling in felt tents". All present were the guests of Jenghiz Khan. A thousand chieftains, generals, and nobles, with their wives, were seated in the marquee, while the whole populace was entertained without in the open space. Huge cauldrons filled with boiled horse-flesh were driven round in carts, and mighty pots containing a briny sauce with so strong a taste that it burned the mouth and provoked a splendid thirst.

But however much they might eat, and however great their thirst, the supply in the cauldrons and pots was not exhausted, and the koumiss continued to foam in the pitchers. They vomited, and then started drinking again; lying down where they sat or stood, they slept a few hours, and began to gorge themselves anew. Numerous musicians were present. People sang and danced; they boasted of their heroic deeds, of the loot they had got together in numerous campaigns, of trinkets and fine clothes.

Against the northern side of the marquee, upon a dais, stood the throne. On the throne sat Jenghiz Khan, with his principal wife Bortei. Somewhat lower, on the right, his sons, his other relatives, and in various grades the Orlok and the chieftains were seated; to the left, on Bortei's side, sat his other wives, his mother, and his daughters, and then the wives of his guests. In front of Temuchin lay great heaps of golden and silver ware, furs, brocades, and silks. These he gave away in abundance. No Mongol, this day, entered the tent of his ruler without being richly rewarded.

Jenghiz was in great fettle, and his whole people shared his pleasure and his strength. He was "Ssutu-Bogdo"—the God-sent—, who had raised, not his own tribe alone, but all the 400,000 Mongols, above every other people, having proclaimed "This race of the Beydey, which, stubbornly and valiantly,

regardless of suffering and dangers, has remained true to me and has with equanimity borne joy and sorrow, is the most sublime people in the world. It has, in every peril, shown me the most perfect loyalty until I attained the goal of my endeavour, and it is my will that henceforward it shall bear the name of Koko-Mongols—the Heavenly-Blue Mongols.”

With this distinguished name, he aroused in the breasts of the nomads a new feeling—national pride. No Mongol any longer was to be a slave or a servant, his sole duty being to bear arms. All “the peoples who dwell in the felt tents” considered themselves to be promoted in rank by becoming Jenghiz’ subjects, and thenceforward, to whatever tribe they belonged, they styled themselves Mongols. This name became a bond of union, a force that carried them like a hurricane across a hundred degrees of longitude and gave them power over the whole earth, which they owned “as far as the hoof of a Mongolian horse could tread”. Forty years later, Giovanni Piano Carpini, the Franciscan friar whom Pope Innocent IV sent as legate to the court of Jenghiz Khan’s grandson, reported: “They despise all who lie without the bounds of their nation, however distinguished they may be. Thus at the Imperial Court (the Court of the Great Khan) we saw the Grand Duke of Russia, the son of the King of Georgia, numerous Sultans, and other great lords; but to none of them was paid any particular respect or consideration. Nay, rather, the Tartars (Mongols) appointed to attend on them, who are often men of inferior rank, appeared unconcernedly before these monarchs and took the better seats, so that the monarchs often had to sit behind the backs of the attendants.”

But no one as yet knew to what a plenitude of power the Ssutu-Bogdo would lead his race. The Mongols believed themselves to have already reached the goal of their desires. Jenghiz’ realm stretched a thousand miles from east to west, all the way from the Khingan Mountains to the Altai Range, and more than six hundred miles from north to south, from Lake Baikal to the southern marge of the Gobi Desert. Thirty-one peoples

comprising a population of more than two million obeyed his slightest word. The men now in his tent were happy to be his chosen followers.

Jenghiz laughed, and the tent rocked with the laughter of the thousand noble guests. Jenghiz wanted to drink, the master of the ceremonies shouted "Ha!", the musicians at the entry to the tent struck up, men and women rose, the men danced before him and the women before Bortei, his principal wife. When Jenghiz cut a titbit from a tasty piece of meat and sent it to one of the Orloks, there was general envy of this privileged person, whom nothing in the world would induce to part with a morsel of it to another. If he was stuffed to repletion, he put the titbit in his pouch, that he might eat next morning the gift of Jenghiz Khan. But this was no mere Byzantinism. At the Mongol court, now in the making, no system of etiquette had as yet been established. It was love and admiration which prevailed; the same feelings which had driven Jelmi to suck Jenghiz' arrow-wound, although he believed the arrow to be poisoned; which induced Bogurchi and Sabutai on one occasion when, during a campaign, their master had gone to sleep upon the ground, to spend the night holding a blanket over him to protect him from the snowflakes which had begun to fall.

Jenghiz' glances roved hither and thither over the assembly, and when his gaze stayed upon the face of one of his loyal followers he spoke loudly of the man's deeds and services, mentioning the distinction, the title, the command that he was to receive. His friends paid him honour by dancing before him, by singing to him, and by offering him a full goblet. Three or four times they would make as if to surrender the goblet, and then, when he stretched out his hand to take it, they would spring back and recommence the game, until at length he snatched the cup from them. Then they would clap their hands, sing and stamp rhythmically, while he drank.

But however strangely, and with seeming arbitrariness, Jenghiz might distribute his favours, he showed an infallible knowledge of human nature in assigning each to the place he

could best fill. Never had this ruler occasion to regret or cancel an appointment. The reasons which determined his choice in these matters were amazing for the period. When the Orlok marvelled at his appointing one of the boldest and strongest chieftains whose valour had decided many a hard fight to a post which, though important, deprived him of his independence, Jenghiz explained:

“There is no hero to equal Yesukah nor any warrior so adroit as he. But he knows nothing of fatigue, and laughs at hardship. He believes that all his companions and all those who serve under him are like himself, and for this reason he ought not to be in command of an army. A commander must be one who himself feels hunger and thirst, so that, from his own condition, he can grasp the feelings of his followers. Then he will not allow his men to suffer hunger and thirst, and will not let his horses become emaciated.”

Fresh and ever fresh surprises delighted the assembly. The delegates from distant tribes brought the ruler gifts, and most of them Jenghiz bestowed on others. Tatatungo, the Uighur, showed the new seal which he had carven out of jade, and the Mongols were astounded at the strange-looking signs, which were said to signify: “God in Heaven and Khakan on Earth, the Power of God. The Seal of the Ruler of All Mankind.”

Jenghiz Khan grew meditative:

“Heaven has appointed me to rule all the nations,” he said, “for hitherto there has been no order upon the steppes. Children did not hearken to the words of their fathers, younger brothers disobeyed elder brothers, the husband had no confidence in his wife, and the wife did not heed her husband’s commands. Inferiors did not obey superiors, and superiors did not fulfil their duties to inferiors; the rich did not support the rulers, and there was no content anywhere. The race was without order and without understanding; that was why, on all hands, there were malcontents, liars, thieves, rebels, and robbers. But when Jenghiz Khan’s good fortune became apparent, all came under

his command and he will rule them by fixed laws that rest and happiness shall prevail in the world."

Turning to Tatatungo, he went on:

"You must ever be at hand to write down my words, for I shall make a Yasak [code of laws] which shall be binding upon all that come after me. When my successors have ruled for five hundred, a thousand, or ten thousand years, those who take my place will continue to follow the laws and customs prescribed by Jenghiz Khan, and to do so without alteration, Heaven will vouchsafe them help and blessing. They will live long and enjoy the pleasures of life. But if they depart from my Yasak, the realm will rock and crumble. Once again will they call for Jenghiz Khan, but they will not find him."

His gaze wandered round the circle and rested upon young Shigi Kutuku, a Tartar whom, as an infant wearing a golden bracelet and a girdle trimmed with sable which betokened high birth, he had picked up on a stricken field and entrusted to Bortei for upbringing.

"Shigi Kutuku," he said, "fervent disciple of Tatatungo my Keeper of the Seal, you shall now be my eyes and my ears. I appoint you supreme judge in cases of fraud or theft or any other breach of the laws to be codified in my Yasak; and no one shall oppose what you decide. You will inscribe upon tablets every one of your judgments, that no later judgments may modify yours."

However suddenly the decision had been formed, however haphazard (as it might seem) the appointment of a supreme judge, the Khakan had made no mistake in his choice. The two principles in accordance with which Shigi Kutuku formed his decisions became the pillars of Mongolian legal procedure. Forced evidence was worth nothing; and a Mongol was not to be held guilty of any crime unless caught red-handed, or making a voluntary confession. Under Jenghiz' rule, murder, robbery with violence, theft, and adultery disappeared from among the Mongols, and their conception of honour rose so high that no one justly accused ever denied the deed, while

many came voluntarily to the judge acknowledging their offences and demanding punishment.

Only fragments have come down to us of this Yasak, which Jenghiz, before he died, ordered to be inscribed in Uighurian writing upon iron tablets. Even among the Mongols it has been forgotten, just as the realm of Jenghiz Khan has vanished. But it is a remarkable fact that after the decay of the Mongolian Empire, one-and-a-half centuries after Jenghiz' death, Tamerlane, the new great conqueror, recognised that he owed his own ascent to his having strictly followed the Yasak of Jenghiz Khan; and three hundred years after Jenghiz, Baber, the Great Mogul, established his realm in Hindustan upon the foundations of the Yasak.

The feast grew louder and more riotous, but in the evening, when Jenghiz was alone with Bortei, she spoke to him reproachfully, saying:

"Over all you have extended your grace, none was too insignificant to escape your attention, save that the best of all you have forgotten. Was it not Bogurchi who, in the days when you were fighting against poverty and affliction, was the first to join you and to become your most loyal companion? Was it not he who for you performed the hardest deeds? Was it not he who was always willing to risk his life in your service?"

"I should like to hear that he does not bear me a grudge and has only good things to say of me," replied the Khakan with a laugh. "Then I shall grant him distinctions beyond those given to all whom he might envy."

Thereupon he sent a servant to Bogurchi's hut to learn what the Orlok had to say.

Next morning, when they were assembled in the marquee once more, Jenghiz said:

"Yesterday, I was allotting you honours and favours, and it seemed as if I had completely overlooked Bogurchi. Indeed, my wife Bortei reproached me for having done so. I therefore sent a servant to Bogurchi's tent, to learn that he was defending me against his wife, and was prepared to go on sacrificing his

energies in my behalf and to remain my companion, even if he were to starve. Here were his actual words: 'How could my ruler forget me or I forget him? The Ssutu-Bogdo is closely connected with my innermost thoughts.' " Jenghiz' voice grew louder, and his eyes flashed, as he continued: "You, my nine Orlok, I am sure that none of you can envy Bogurchi. My Bogurchi, who continues to speak friendly words when the bow drops from his wearied hands, and who was my staunchest comrade in the times of my sorest need. My Bogurchi, whose spirit never knew cowardice. My Bogurchi, who clung to me more devotedly, the greater the danger. My Bogurchi, to whom life and death were indifferent, if I did not distinguish you the worthiest of all above the rest, I should be unworthy to expect zeal from my servants. You shall stand above the Orloks, to guard the great, the deafening trumpet which summons my people together. You are to learn that you shall be supreme commander of the armed forces in the country and watch over the affairs of the empire. You will henceforward be known as Kuluk-Bogurchi, this being a supreme title in the land."

Therewith he embraced his most faithful and devoted companion, the first follower of his youth, the man who had ridden with him to wrest from the thieving Taijiuts the eight horses that were his sole possession.

II

Week after week, apparently quite unconcerned with other matters, Jenghiz Khan continued to feast his Orlok, his chieftains, and his dignitaries. But meanwhile to ninety-five of the army chiefs had been allotted special posts and special tasks. They were to number all the tribes—not per head of persons, for human beings die and others are born—but by tents. A permanent General Staff would allot the summer and the winter pastures in accordance with the size of the various tribes. This General Staff, moreover, was to keep track of information as to con-

ditions in neighbouring countries, to decide how many men for every ten tents were to be called to arms in case of a campaign and to establish the lines of march. Staff officers would settle disputes; military policemen would see to the safety of the roads, and take charge of strayed beasts, restoring them to their owners when these could be found. Jenghiz Khan forgot nothing. He knew what a grievous loss it was to a nomad who was robbed of his horses or yaks, and he decreed that the punishment for such a theft should be death. One consequence of this law is the custom which prevailed to our own day in remote parts of Mongolia and Turkestan, that a runaway camel is not suffered to drink from a strange well, so that, being tormented by thirst, it shall find its way back to its own master.

Now the swift messenger service was organised in every detail. So important did this service seem to Jenghiz Khan that he placed it under the immediate command of Jelmi, his next vassal after Bogurchi. Every one of these "arrow" messengers was to be regarded as sacred. The highest prince in the land must make room for him to pass when the sound of his horse's bells was heard; and if his mount grew tired, the best available horse had to be supplied. By day and by night these messengers rode across the steppes and the desert, crossing in a few days distances which usually needed weeks to cover. An "arrow" messenger's head and body were bandaged to help him endure his long ride. He rode his steed nearly to death, and slept in the saddle, with the result that nothing could happen throughout the broad land of Mongolia without tidings being promptly conveyed to the Khakan.

The order of precedence established by Jenghiz was valid both in war-time and in peace. The princes, chieftains, headmen of tribes were, in war-time, commanders of the tumans (myriads), the thousands, and the hundreds. Neighbouring tribes united to form divisions, and the neighbour in the horde was the neighbour in the field. Every commander had, in peace-time, under the guidance of instructors, to train his lieges, and see to it that their equipment was always in order. He was responsible

for his people, having to answer for it with his own person that they could take the field instantly when the command came, being prepared to fling themselves into the saddle and ride even by night. When he went to the front, he must appoint a deputy, for whose actions he himself remained fully responsible. No commander was safe, in case of failure, from being degraded to the ranks, while every warrior who distinguished himself could look forward to the highest position in the army. To one Jenghiz would entrust the duty of collecting all the wandering families of the steppes, whom he would have under his command; to another he would allot several men from every tribe—both thus becoming chiefs of mighty hordes and leaders of thousands.

Thus in Central Asia during the thirteenth century there originated a people in arms. Even while “feasting” the Orlok and the chieftains, Jenghiz was establishing the framework of a militarist State in which every man was fully enrolled whether for war or for peace. But peace was to be nothing else than a preparation for war. War and the chase were the only handicrafts worthy of a man; and the hunt, as practised by Mongolians, was simply a training for war, being military in all its phases. Every man was liable to war service from the age of fifteen to the age of seventy; and he who was not called into the field had to do labour service. There were the herds to watch, weapons to fashion, horses to break in. Nor were any wages paid in Jenghiz’ realm. On the contrary, a tithe of every man’s possessions belonged to the Khakan.

But that men might be free for war service and the handicrafts of war, and discharge their manifold obligations, Jenghiz Khan enlisted the women too in his organisation. He gave to women rights and privileges such as did not exist in any other Asiatic country. A woman could do as she pleased with the family possessions, buying and selling and bartering as she wished. A man, he declared, must have confidence in his wife, but in return she must obey her husband, and adultery was punishable with death. A woman’s highest duty was to further the uplifting of her husband. In the Bilik (the collection of his sayings) he remarks:

"If a woman is stupid and slovenly, without understanding and without order, we see in her the bad qualities of her husband. But if she manages her household well, receives guests and messengers suitably and entertains them hospitably, she enhances her husband's prestige, giving him a notable reputation in the assembly. Good men are recognised by the goodness of their wives."

The woman's most important obligation was to see to it that her husband should be ready at any moment, when the Khan's call came, to change his fur cap for a leather helmet with its pendent neck-guard, and ride into the field. He himself had merely to keep his weapons in good order and condition; but his wife must see to it that his "dacha" (sheepskin cloak made of two layers with wool next the body and wool outside) was always ready for use, as must be his riding-boots and the thick felt socks that he pulled over them. The saddle-bags, too, must always be furnished with strips of dried horse-flesh and cakes of dried milk, and attached to the saddle must be a leather sack filled with koumiss.

Her second care was to prepare stores for the winter—since in summer, when there is abundance of koumiss, the Mongols need little else. She must make butter out of cow's milk for, scalded, and stored in tubes of sheep's gut, this never goes rancid. The buttermilk left over from the churning is allowed to become sour, boiled till it curdles, and then the curds are dried to an iron hardness. When winter comes she will pour hot water over these blocks of dried buttermilk curds and shake vigorously. The product is a tart-tasting drink, a luxury in Mongolia where the water is apt to be foul and to stink of urine. But in this matter too, Jenghiz Khan made reforms, forbidding that wells should be soiled by allowing cattle to drink direct from the source. Later, when Jenghiz Khan's Yasak was forgotten, this wise hygienic measure likewise passed into oblivion, for those who travel in Mongolia to-day have reason to complain of the condition of the water.

When slaughtering beasts, the thrifty nomads chose weak

and sickly specimens. The flesh was cut in strips and dried in the sun and the wind, so thoroughly dried that it could be stored for years without putrefaction. From the guts and the blood the Mongol women made sausages, which were eaten fresh. Ox-hides were elaborated into sacks, and horse-hides could be stitched to make boots. Although the position of the Mongols was no longer what it had been in the days before Temuchin, when iron stirrups were a luxury which only a chieftain could enjoy, women slaves and servants were still rare except in the tents of chieftains, and a Mongol's wife had to work hard.

III

"Now, when Heaven has commissioned me to rule over all peoples, I command that from the tumans [myriads], the thousands, and the hundreds, there shall be chosen ten thousand men for my personal guard. These men, my body-guard, who will be in close contact with me, must be tall, strong, and adroit, the sons of chieftains, dignitaries, or free warriors," commanded Jenghiz Khan. This guard was given a superior position to the mass of the army. "The officer of my body-guard is of higher rank than the commander of a thousand." But even these officers were not granted the right of punishing the guardsmen. The latter were under the immediate jurisdiction of the Khakan, who established in them, not merely a force of élites, but also a human reservoir of men in his personal confidence, whose capacities and talents he well knew, and from among whom he could fill every post that fell vacant. This institution fulfilled another aim. He succeeded, by forming it, in binding to himself and his family the aristocracy of the steppes, men who had been hitherto unruly, proud of their independence, and endowed with particularist tendencies. So long as these sons of chieftains and princes remained in his horde, they were hostages for the good behaviour and sound sentiments of their fathers. And even after they should have returned to the paternal horde, they

would remain predominantly officers and officials of the Khakan. He thus transformed the landed aristocracy, which in a loosely integrated nomadic realm necessarily constituted a perpetual focus of unrest, into a group of courtiers, upon whom he intended to base the aristocratic principle of his organisation.

From among these ten thousand guardsmen, he selected one thousand to form the permanent body-guard. To them he announced:

"It is to you, my body-guards, that I have entrusted the repose of my body and my mind upon rainy and snowy nights as well as upon nights that are clear, in times of peace as well as in times of excitement and combat with the foe. I bequeath as an instruction to my successors that they shall regard these body-guards as a memorial of me, and take the utmost care of them." The command of the body-guard was entrusted to Zagan Noyon, a Tangut who had been brought up by Bortei as her own son since childhood, and who had been Jenghiz Khan's inseparable companion. Even princes had to obey his orders.

These proceedings were not the outcome of any undue caution. Jenghiz Khan's realm was only now in course of formation. The nomads were not yet accustomed to obey one man's rule, and to regard one man's word as law. Artifices were inaugurated to gain possession of influential posts. Groups were intriguing against each other, and there was one man among his subjects no less shrewd than Jenghiz himself who was craftily endeavouring to make his own influence felt—this was the shaman Gokchu-Teb-Tengri, who claimed to be in Heaven's counsel, and before whom all trembled.

The shaman was a source of anxiety to the Khakan. Jenghiz knew Gokchu to be a dangerous man. With one exception he had occupied all departments with his subordinates each in supreme command in his own place. The exception was the priestly order.

Everyone regarded Gokchu as the chief of the shamans. Gokchu-Teb-Tengri, who proclaimed the will of Heaven, and

had given the Khakan the name of Jenghiz. But Jenghiz refrained from confirming him in his position.

Gokchu troubled little about that. He, mediator between Heaven and Earth, considered himself to be the ruler's first adviser. Disregarding the regulations of precedence, he would speak in the kuriltai before the Orlok and the chieftains had spoken. The brothers and the sons of the Khakan were much concerned to notice that, though Jenghiz' face darkened as he lent an ear to Gokchu's advice, he nevertheless followed it.

Soon there was open enmity between Jenghiz' family and Gokchu. Temugu, the Khakan's youngest brother, once made a curt answer to the shaman, and the latter snubbed Temugu before the whole assembly. Jenghiz made no comment.

Now the shaman began to express his opinions before Jenghiz' most immediate adherents. The whole nation knew this.

The tension grew from day to day, but the struggle seemed to have been settled in advance. Gokchu went in and out of Jenghiz' tent as he pleased.

Gokchu said to Jenghiz: "So long as Kasar lives, your dominion is insecure, for Heaven has declared: 'First Jenghiz shall rule over the peoples, and then his brother Kasar will become ruler.'"

The Khakan said nothing. He was silent, and harboured suspicion in his breast. Secretly, however, he watched his brother's behaviour. Then, one day, he saw Kasar press the hand of Kulan, the wife whom Jenghiz loved most tenderly. There was no mistake about it.

Jenghiz Khan sat gloomily in his tent, when, immediately after the feast, Gokchu entered. A smile of triumph lit up the lean ascetic countenance of the shaman, and he said:

"Did you see how Kasar pressed the hand of Kulan your wife?"

Thereupon Jenghiz made up his mind. Late that night he summoned the officer of the guard and sent him with his men to Kasar's tent. His orders were to take off Kasar's cap and belt,

which were the signs of the free Mongol, and lay the offender in chains.

Jenghiz himself undertook the examination.

Kasar's wives hastened to Yulun, weeping. Yulun sprang from her couch, seized a knife, and made promptly for Kasar's tent.

The guardsmen wanted to bar her entry, but none ventured to lay an arresting hand on the mother of the Khakan.

Jenghiz stood gloomily and threateningly watching his brother, who lay before him bound, but defiant.

Yulun flung herself between the brothers, cut Kasar's bonds, gave him back his cap and belt, tore open her dress and pointed to her breasts, saying:

"Look, those are the breasts which you two sucked. Why do you wish to destroy your own flesh and blood? What crime has Kasar committed? Always he has warded off the attacks of your enemies. Now they are destroyed, and you no longer have any use for Kasar."

Silent and confused, Temuchin made no answer to the words of his mother.

Suddenly he turned on his heel and left the tent without a word.

In his own tent, he found Bortei awaiting him. She said:

"What sort of an order are you establishing, when your own brothers cannot be sure of their lives? What sort of a Khakan are you when you heed the words of a shaman? If Gokchu has so little fear of you now, what will he do when you are dead? Who will then obey your sons? Did you establish your realm for your own family or for that of Gokchu?"

The same night, Jenghiz sent for his youngest brother Temugu, and said:

"If Gokchu comes to-morrow, and takes the same tone, do with him as you will."

On the morrow, the first thing that Jenghiz heard was that Kasar and his immediate followers had ridden away. Summoning

Sabutai, he dispatched him after Kasar, whom Sabutai soon caught up:

"You may find supporters," said Sabutai, "but you will not find blood-friends. You may win subjects, but you will not win brothers."

Kasar turned back.

Meanwhile Gokchu with his father Munlik and his six brothers had come to Jenghiz.

Temugu ventured upon a remark.

Gokchu arrogantly sneered at him.

Temugu sprang up and seized the shaman by the collar.

They began to wrestle.

"It is forbidden to wrestle in the presence of the Khakan," observed Jenghiz. "Go outside."

But as soon as the two were outside the tent, the men who had previously been placed there flung themselves upon Gokchu and broke his spine.

"He lies there on the ground without stirring," announced Temugu on returning into the tent.

Threatening was the attitude of Gokchu's brothers, who feared evil.

"Let us go without and look," said Jenghiz.

Outside was a posse of the body-guard, and the least threatening movement on the part of Gokchu's brothers would have been their death-warrant. Silently they lifted the corpse of the shaman and carried it away.

Munlik, their father, returned with Jenghiz into the tent and said:

"Oh Khan, I have always been your companion, and the companionship has reached its term."

Jenghiz angrily exclaimed:

"You lie, Munlik. You came because you were afraid not to come. I received you, uttering no word of wrath, and I set your feet upon the road to honour. I gave your sons high offices and dignities, but you did not impose modesty and subordination upon them. Gokchu wished to raise himself above my sons and

my brothers. He wanted to compete even with me. What is your record? Beside the muddy water, you swore unconditional loyalty to me. Now you wish to repudiate your oath, do you not? What is that worth? The word given overnight to be recalled in the morning? Let us say nothing more about the matter."

Munlik made no answer to Jenghiz Khan's reproaches, nor did Jenghiz Khan himself ever allude to the matter again. Munlik continued to sit in the council of the Orlok and his sons retained their high positions in the army. But in the next assembly Tatatungo promulgated a new law in the Yasak. Death was to be the punishment of any prince or dignitary who, no matter upon what account, should apply to a foreign ruler without the knowledge of the Khakan.

Stupefaction spread among the people when they heard that Gokchu-Teb-Tengri, the mediator with Heaven, was dead, and when the report ran that he must have ascended into Heaven since his body could not be found, Temuchin announced that "The shaman Gokchu calumniated the brothers of Jenghiz Khan, and, in punishment, Heaven took his life and his body as well, for Heaven protects the Khakan and his whole family, and destroys those, whomsoever they may be, that work against us."

At the same time he appointed the elderly Yussun, a Bey of another branch of his own family, to be chief of shamans, ordering him to wear white raiment, to ride on a white horse, and to sit in a place of honour.

CHAPTER VI

TRAINING OF THE MONGOLS

I

JENGHIZ KHAN'S dominions were now bounded by three great realms.

To the east and south-east lay, behind the Great Wall, the mighty realm of the Kins. To the south was the Tangut State of Hsi-Hsia, and to the west there stretched right across the Pamirs (the Roof of the World, whose mountains thrust upward into the sky) the Central Asiatic country of Kara-Khitai.

In each of these three regions the General Staff already had its spies, for the Khakan wanted the most precise intelligence concerning them. His Keeper of the Seal, Tatatungo the Uighur, who had been born in one of the States tributary to Kara-Khitai, was also able to give him much useful information.

The motherland of all three realms was the exceedingly ancient Empire of China which, once of enormous size, had extended from the regions of perpetual ice to the regions of perpetual summer. In due time, however, its rulers had grown weak. Three hundred years before, it broke into two parts, the northern part being the Liao Empire and the southern part the Sung Empire. After a while the Sung Emperors were compelled to acknowledge the independent kingship of the Tangut princes who had been Chinese viceroys in Hsi-Hsia. About two hundred years ago the Liao Dynasty, which ruled over the northern fragment of Old China, had been replaced by the Kin Dynasty. But one of the Liao princes would not accept this subordination, migrated westward, and founded there the realm of Kara-Khitai. Thus four realms had arisen out of this one mighty dominion.

In the west, in Kara-Khitai, ruled an elderly emperor, dis-

inclined for warlike adventures. But the government of his viceroys was harsh, and the vassal States, like the homeland of Tatatungo the Uighur, sighed under their oppression. When a Mongolian army penetrated farther into the Altai region and made an end of the rule of the other Naiman prince Buiruk, the whole domain of the Uighurs was sandwiched in between the territory of Jenghiz Khan and Kara-Khitai proper. Jenghiz now sent an embassy to Idikut, the Uighur prince, whom he advised to accept him, Jenghiz, as overlord, instead of the Emperor of Kara-Khitai. Idikut began by sending the Mongol ruler the customary presents, later visited him in his horde, and became his vassal.

The Tangut State Hsi-Hsia had already had personal experience of Jenghiz Khan. After his victory over the Naimans, he had made a brief invasion into Hsi-Hsia, burning a few frontier towns, had taken a cursory glimpse of this urban and unwarlike people confined within the narrow spaces of towns, and had for the first time with his cavalry ridden down a few detachments of pikemen, but had then retreated before the advancing army and made for his headquarters beside the Onon. For all that the Hsi-Hsians could tell, this first appearance of Jenghiz Khan within their borders had been nothing more than an ordinary nomadic raid.

The third neighbour was the empire behind the Great Wall which was an everlasting stimulus to the nomads' lust for plunder. The fine textiles, laces, articles of apparel, weapons, and utensils which for ages had been carried off on casual incursions, were as nothing compared with those which passed through the hands of Moslem traders who carried on the whole commerce between China and Central Asia, and who had wonderful tales to relate of the Middle Kingdom.

Jenghiz Khan was fond of conversing with these travelled men, and was glad to entertain every passing caravan at his court. As a boy among the Jungirats, he had already got to know them, and became more closely acquainted with them when among the Keraites; he had seen them too in the Naiman country;

and as things now were, all their trade routes led across his territory. Their multifarious knowledge, their adroitness in buying and selling, had always pleased him, so that in his *Bilik*, or Book of Sayings, he held up the merchants as a model to the Mongols. In the arts of riding and war, his subjects ought to be no less highly trained and experienced than were these traders in business affairs.

Nevertheless to begin with there had been a few misunderstandings. The merchants saw that their wares were pleasing to the nomad chieftain, and began to put up the prices, until the Khakan waxed angry, and ordered his warriors to take whatever they wanted without payment and drive the traders away.

Thereupon one of the merchants, whose caravan was already within the Khakan's dominions, having encountered his plundered friends, made a virtue of necessity, and handed over to Jenghiz his whole stock of goods for nothing. Jenghiz gave him a splendid reception, praised the gifts, distributed some of them among his Orlok, invited the merchant to stay with him a while, and to come back soon—and when the bewildered man departed, glad to get off scot-free, and contemplated the beasts standing before his tent, he was delighted to find that they were his own camels laden with return gifts of costly furs, gold, and silver.

After this incident, relations between the merchants and Jenghiz remained perfectly satisfactory. His strange innovation in the way of doing business was accepted without criticism. Traders were eager to visit his horde, bringing him their finest wares as presents, were entertained as guests of the Mongol Khakan, who silently sat in his felt tent over his koumiss taking notice of whatever his visitors said or did, and never wearied of listening to their tales of travel and adventure. When they left, there having been no talk of price, he bestowed upon them gifts which made the visit well worth their trouble.

Jenghiz now asked these merchants many questions about the Kin Empire. He heard wonder upon wonder. They told him of roads leading across rivers over arches which bore ways paved with great slabs of stone. (The Mongols at this date knew nothing

of bridges.) Huge floating houses sailed up and down stream. The notables of the country did not ride on horseback like the Mongols, but were carried through the streets in gilt chairs slung on poles. Everything throughout the country was of inconceivable splendour and wealth. But Kin seemed to be as powerful as she was beautiful and rich. Her towns were so large and populous that all the Mongols could have been housed in a single one of them. These towns were surrounded by high walls, which no horse in the world could leap over, nor any enemy scale. The Emperor's standing army was far more numerous than that of the Khakan, even without calling up the reserves. His soldiers had bows which needed twenty men to draw them, and there were war-chariots drawn by twenty horses. They had engines which could hurl fire at a foe, missiles which burst with the sound of thunder and dashed everything around into fragments.

Jenghiz grew increasingly reflective, the more he heard from the merchants, for each made the same report. The powers at the disposal of the Kin Emperor must be immeasurable. Inexhaustible armies, impregnable fortresses, vast amounts of munitions of war. Yet it seemed to him incontestable that some day he would have to take up this incredible struggle and wage a war of life or death against the mighty Empire of Kin—were it only to safeguard his youthful Mongolian realm. Certainly it was a lure, the thought of seeing with his own eyes these marvels of the land on the other side of the Great Wall; but that could have been achieved by nothing more than a bold raid such as his forefathers had often undertaken. What he was now contemplating was something much bigger, a decisive war of conquest.

It already seemed barely credible that Kin had looked idly on while the nomads were being unified, since for centuries her main policy had been to counteract any strengthening of those who dwelt in the felt tents, and the Kins had shown consummate skill in setting one tribe against another. Always attempts at unification had been nipped in the bud. That was why Kabul Khan had been poisoned, why Katul Khan had been destroyed,

why two other Khans of the race of the Borjigins had been executed—for no other reason than that they had brought too many tribes under their rule. Only because he himself had acted so swiftly, because he, Temuchin, had always fought against enemies whom the Chinese generals regarded as stronger and more dangerous than himself—such as the Wang-Khan, Toto, Baibuka Tayan—had the men on the other side of the Great Wall abstained from wiles that would have led to his destruction. Then, after these adversaries had been laid low, the Kins had been taken by surprise when the swift unification of the Mongolian realm took place. At the last moment, indeed, the Kin emissary Yuen-chi crossed the desert, travelling two thousand li (nearly a thousand miles) to see what was going on in Mongolia—but he had come too late. There were no allies left for Kin. To make war against him, the Khakan, the Kins would have to send their own armies across the desert. Well, he had learned what these armies were worth ten years before in the campaign against the Tartars. Let them come.

It was not the soldiers of Kin who alarmed him, but the cunning of the civilians. They would not merely protect and support any whom they found discontented, but would themselves sow discontent and foment risings. He himself had no fear of that, but would his children be able to maintain his own iron discipline over these rebellious and unruly chieftains, over these diversified peoples whom he managed to hold together? Would they stand firm when the Emperor of the Kins tried to set his sons one against the other, tempting them with titles and great promises? Kara-Khitai and Hsi-Hsia were not dangerous as neighbours; but so long as this Kin Empire lay on his frontier, his realm was continually threatened by internal dissensions and disruption. Part of the dream of his youth had been fulfilled; a nation of horsemen had assembled beneath his banner—now was to begin the further realization of his dream, the struggle against an urban people.

Still, however clearly Jenghiz Khan had made up his mind that he would have to fight Kin, the reports of the merchants and of

his own spies made him aware that neither he nor his Mongols were properly equipped for this decisive struggle. So, with all the caution and thoroughness proper to his nature, Jenghiz Khan began to make ready for the mighty enterprise.

II

Hsi-Hsia, the Tangut State in the south, was organised wholly after the Chinese model, having Chinese-trained armies, and Chinese-built fortresses, so Jenghiz Khan decided to make Hsi-Hsia the touchstone of his strength. By attacking it, he would measure his forces, and would train his Mongols for the war against China.

During the very next year after mounting the throne of the Khakan, he and his horsemen invaded Hsi-Hsia, defeated the army sent against him, overran a few lesser places, and came to a stand before the first big fortress, Volohai by name.

The impetuous Mongols urged their leader to take the place by storm. He allowed them to try.

The attacks were repulsed with great slaughter.

Jenghiz Khan began a systematic siege, and soon realised that his wild riders were incapable of it. They could not wait patiently, could not be content to advance slowly, step by step. Discontent and uncertainty began to prevail in the Mongol camp.

Jenghiz Khan would not hear of raising the siege. Faith in his white standard with the falcon, in his tutelary spirit, in the nine-tailed emblem of the Khakan, must not be shaken on any account, so he had recourse to one of his amazing strokes of cunning.

He sent a message to the commandant of the fortress saying that he would raise the siege upon the delivery of one thousand cats and ten thousand swallows. Astonished though he was at the strange request, the general hunted up all the cats and netted all the swallows in the town, and delivered the desired quota to the Mongols, taking the precaution not to open the gates of the town when doing so. Now Jenghiz Khan had no further need of open

gates. He commanded his men to tie a tuft of cotton-wool to the tail of every cat and every swallow, to light these impedimenta, and to turn the beasts and the birds loose. The affrighted swallows sought their nests and the enraged and bewildered cats made for their lairs. The inhabitants of the city gained nothing by killing a few of these fire-bearers. The town was ablaze in hundreds of places at once, and, while the conflagrations raged, the Mongols stormed the city.

Jenghiz Khan's warriors exulted. "The fortress has been taken," they shouted. Nothing could resist their lord. Soon the whole country would be in their possession.

But the Khakan himself did not exult. A clever ruse had given him the victory, but the same trick would be of no avail a second time, so what was he to do? Against fortresses he was powerless.

His Mongols could not understand why he did not follow up his brilliant victory, while the sovereign of the Tanguts did his best with feverish haste to equip another army and to strengthen the fortifications of all the towns in the country. But while this work was in progress Jenghiz Khan's emissaries came to the palace at Hoang-Hsing-fu (now known as Ning-hsia), to state their leader's terms. The Khakan was ready to make peace and withdraw his troops from Hsi-Hsia, upon promise of an annual tribute.

The indignant sovereign of Hsi-Hsia wanted to reject the impudent demands of the nomad chief. Was he, the king of a great realm, to become the vassal of a Mongol Khan? But his generals reminded him that even the Emperors of China used sometimes to send presents to chieftains who had invaded their country and of whom they wanted to be rid. Then, after a little time, they quietly assembled their armies and fell upon the invaders to smite them hip and thigh.

Peace was made, the tribute was paid, and Jenghiz promptly returned to his horde. He had achieved what he desired. A victory had been gained, his Mongols were eager for fresh battles and further conquests, and he had learned wherein stood the strength of the towns and the weakness of his own realm. He must turn his new experiences to practical account.

III

Jenghiz Khan's General Staff got busily to work. The officers and the tribal leaders from all parts of the country were commanded to assemble in his horde. "One who remains in his own locality instead of coming to me to receive my instructions, will have the fate of a stone dropped into the water—he will simply disappear." Such were the words which Jenghiz dictated to his Keeper of the Seal, Tatatungo; and, by decree, this military continuation course of the thirteenth century was made a periodical institution. Having created a people in arms, Jenghiz Khan now went on to form an officers' corps which was continually receiving a more effective military training, setting it to cope with every situation and to scorn difficulties. In this way he actually made his Koko-Mongols the superiors of all the peoples of the earth. The army of 600,000 men which his grandson Batu was able to put into the field as Khan of the Golden Horde three decades after the inauguration of this course, consisted only to the extent of one-fourth of Mongols, but these Mongols occupied the commanding positions from the highest to those of the corporals who were the least of the non-commissioned officers. Their commanders were able without the slightest hitch to perform the most arduous tasks, setting their armies to work upon the huge area which extended from Poland to the Balkans, from the Dnieper to the Adriatic, and yet assembling the troops in mass for all decisive battles. This would have been beyond the competence of any European commander-in-chief of those days.

The first course in the Mongolian War Academy was concerned wholly with the art of siege; with the use of storming-ladders and sand-bags, the placing and employment of gigantic shields under the protection of which the besiegers could approach the walls of the fortress. Every tribe had to prepare such a siege-train, which was stored in special arsenals under the supervision of officers appointed for the purpose and assigned by them to the men who would use it immediately war was begun.

While throughout Mongolia, in every tribe, under the guidance

of officers returning from experiences in the new art of war, suitable training was begun, Jenghiz dispatched an army under his first-born Juji, accompanied by his best Orlok Sabutai and Jebei, to the north-west, to deal with the last disturbers of the peace of the Mongolian borders in that direction. He no longer needed to take the field himself whenever an action was imminent, for a new generation had grown up and had learned the art of war under his tried commanders. Since he was sovereign lord, it sufficed him to encourage the warriors by his words before they departed for the front.

"You, my faithful commanders, each like the moon at the head of the army, you jewels of my crown. You, the centre of the earth, you as unyielding as rock. And you, my army, which surrounds me like a wall and is ranged in rows like a field of reeds. Hearken all of you to my words. Live in harmony together like the fingers of one hand, and, in the hour of onslaught, be like a falcon that swoops upon its prey. At the hour of sport and pastime you should be like swarming flies; and in the hour of battle you should attack the enemy as an eagle attacks its victim."

Sabutai answered for the army: "What we can or cannot do, the future will decide; whether we shall carry it out or not, may the tutelary spirit of our sovereign know."

The tutelary spirit was with them.

They advanced across the land of the Naimans and reduced the last refractory tribes to obedience, then crossed the Altai Mountains and descended into a steppe country inhabited by Kirghizes, nomads like themselves, but less warlike, and ready to surrender almost without striking a blow. The invaders now turned their attention to the Merkits. Knowing that the custom of this tribe when attacked was to withdraw into the forests where pursuit was impossible, the army wheeled round and crossed the Saian Mountains. Thence they attacked the Merkits in the rear. In this region there was also an Oirat people, which had itself suffered from raids by the Merkits, so they were ready to declare themselves vassals of the Mongols and supplied guides to the army. At length Toto, the Merkit Khan, an old enemy of Jenghiz Khan,

was forced to meet the Mongols in a decisive battle, being defeated and slain.

Although Guchluk, another foe of long standing, son of the Naiman ruler Baibuka Tayan, was still alive, having succeeded in escaping to the court of the Emperor of Kara-Khitai, Jenghiz was well pleased with Juji's successes. He prepared a ceremonious reception for the returning general, and went so far as to give him a fief of his own, saying:

"You are the eldest of my sons. This is the first time you have taken sole command in a war, and, without expecting too much from the army, you have subjugated the forest-dwelling peoples. These peoples I place under your rule."

With this gift, Jenghiz Khan established a Juji dynasty, founding the western kingdom of Kipchak which we know as the realm of the Golden Horde. Juji's descendants were the Khans by whose grace the princes of Russia ruled. For hundreds of years Russian princes visited the courts of these Khans, to swear fealty, and to receive the charter which gave them the right of dominion. The title which, until the end, the Russian tsars bore among the people of Asia was "The White Tsar"; this signifying that the Tsar was regarded as the direct heir of the "Western Realm", for among the Mongols, who denoted the four quarters of the compass by colours, white was the colour of the west.

IV

Two years after the war against Hsi-Hsia, tidings came to the Onon that Ch'ang-Tsung, the old Emperor of Kin, was dead, and that Prince Yuen-chi, whom on the occasion of the kuriltai beside the Onon Jenghiz had treated so contumeliously, had succeeded to the throne.

Now it was time to come to a decision, and Jenghiz Khan believed himself to be ready. Still, he thought it would be preferable, before invading China proper, to make another trial of his strength. For the second year, the tribute had come punctually

from Hsi-Hsia, but this third year the payment was withheld. That signified that the Tangut sovereign had perfected his equipment to his own satisfaction, for otherwise he would not have dared to fall into arrears with his "gift".

Jenghiz Khan therefore invaded Hsi-Hsia, routed the army sent against him, took by storm the rebuilt fortress-city of Volohai, captured a second fortress, and crossed the Great Wall. Here there was awaiting him a new army under the command of the Crown Prince of Hsi-Hsia. This was likewise defeated, and fled to Hoang-hsing-fu (now known as Ning-hsia) the capital of the region of the upper waters of the Hoang-ho or Yellow River. Jenghiz pursued the army and invested the town.

Once more this army of steppe horsemen proved inadequate. No doubt his Mongols had been able to take minor fortresses, but they were unable to break the resistance of a large, populous, and well-defended city.

Jenghiz Khan had no time to spare. In all his enterprises, he was now thinking mainly of Kin. Should Kin be prepared to take action, he must not be tied here upon the outskirts of the Empire. He had heard of the Chinese practice of cutting off the water supply of besieged towns, so he gathered all the Tanguts he could and set them to forced labour. His aim was to build a mighty dam which would divert the waters of the Hoang-ho from the city. But when the dam was half finished, it burst, and the resulting flood, leaving the fortress undisturbed, inundated the plain where the Mongols were encamped. Jenghiz Khan had not merely to raise the siege, but to retreat into the mountains at full speed before the advancing waters.

All the same, the position of the Tanguts was nowise improved. The Mongols were in their country, which was denuded of troops, so that the invaders could plunder as they pleased. The defeated army, now behind the walls of Hoang-hsing-fu, did not dare to take the open field. And how long would the present breathing-space continue?

The King of Hsi-Hsia was greatly relieved when Jenghiz Khan's emissaries offered him peace, even though it was on harsher terms

than before. He must pledge himself, not only to pay tribute, but to render armed assistance in the Mongol leader's subsequent enterprises. As a sign of good faith, he was to give his daughter to Jenghiz Khan as wife. The luckless man had no choice, and he accepted the conditions.

The swearing of peace and friendship was celebrated with great splendour. The betrothal took place amid the exchange of valuable presents and counter-presents. Then Jenghiz delayed no longer. He could think only of Kin, so he retired at the head of his army, taking with him his young wife.

V

While he was still on the way back to his horde, his "arrow"-messenger from the east arrived hot-foot with the report that a Chinese delegation was already on this side of the Great Wall. At once Jenghiz Khan decided to halt and await the coming of the embassy.

In front of his tent, standing, he received the envoys of the Emperor of Kin.

Speaking through an interpreter, the chief of the embassy stated that he had to communicate an imperial message and that it was incumbent upon the persons who received it to kowtow.

"Who is now Emperor in Kin?" asked Jenghiz, pretending that he had not yet heard of the change in the incumbent of the throne.

"Emperor Wei-wang, formerly Prince Yuen-chi," answered the envoy.

As the ritual prescribed, Jenghiz turned southward, but instead of making the expected kowtow, he spat contemptuously.

"I thought," he said, "that the Emperor of Kin, who styles himself 'The Son of Heaven', must be a man of parts. But if an idiot can become Emperor, it is not worth while making obeisance to his messenger."

Jenghiz Khan sent for his horse and rode away.

For the embassy the return journey was not a merry one. They lagged as much as they dared. The whole time the unlucky envoy was pondering how he could report to the Son of Heaven the rude utterance of the barbarian chieftain without risking his own head. Much, indeed, as the mandarin toned things down in describing what Jenghiz had said and done, the Emperor's wrath was mighty, and the envoy did not escape the fate of the bearers of evil tidings. He was cast into gaol.

Then, at the imperial palace in Peking, a Grand Council was held, with a banquet, at which, in accordance with ancient custom, the lowest in rank were asked to give their opinion first. As usual, the views of the dignitaries were by no means accordant, and the Emperor, with whom the ultimate decision rested, commanded, in his wisdom, that the general who voted in favour of war should himself march into the land of the barbarians and punish their chieftain as was meet; Emperor Weiwang ordered the general who had favoured waiting to see what the barbarians would do to begin building a new fortress by the nearest gate in the Great Wall, so that the Kins would be ready in the event of a Mongolian invasion.

The bolder of the two generals took the field as directed. But he thought it would be too dangerous to march across the Gobi Desert, and was content with allowing his soldiers to enjoy a little looting on the farther side of the Great Wall among the peaceful Ongut tribes, who were vassals of China. His caution did not save him from his fate. Jebei Noyon, whom Jenghiz had dispatched eastward with several tumans (myriads) immediately on receiving news of Chinese troops on the Mongolian side of the Great Wall, attacked the Emperor's forces, defeated them, destroyed the new fortress in course of construction, and secured from among the liberated Onguts secret allies for his master.

After this first manifestation of energy, Yuen-chi's warlike courage was exhausted. But since it was regarded as a bad omen that the first campaign after an emperor's accession should end in a defeat, strict orders were sent throughout China that no news

whatever "about the rebels living outside the Great Wall" was to be allowed to leak through.

When now the "General of the Great Wall" nevertheless appeared before the Son of Heaven, and, kowtowing, told his sovereign that the Mongols were arming for the attack, his reception was most ungracious. He was told that he lied, for Kin was at peace with the barbarians.

But the general had so little regard for court etiquette that he obstinately insisted the Mongolians were busily engaged in cutting arrows, forging arrow-heads, and making shields.

For this obstinacy, he, too, was clapped into gaol.

The upshot was that Jenghiz Khan was given a whole year in which to finish undisturbed his preparations for the greatest struggle of his life.

CHAPTER VII

THE CHINESE WAR

I

IN the spring of 1211, Jenghiz Khan summoned his fighting forces, all the men capable of bearing arms between the Altai Mountains and the Khingan Mountains. They assembled at his camp on the Kerulen. The enterprise he now had in view was too important, too fateful, for the nomadic peoples to come to a decision about it at an ordinary War Council. To the officers of the whole army he announced that the time had come to take vengeance upon the Kin Empire for the centuries of oppression and persecution of the peoples who lived in felt tents. They would requite the Chinese for all the injustice and all the treachery that had been done to the earlier Khans.

With loud jubilation the warriors received the news that their victorious Khakan was going to lead them into the wonderland where they expected richer loot than they had ever secured in their lives before.

Jenghiz alone understood the magnitude of his venture, knew that the very existence of the so recently compacted Mongolian realm was at stake. If he sustained a defeat upon foreign territory, a thousand miles from his tribal seat, all would be lost, and for ever. The neighbours whom he had with such difficulty subdued would invade his country and lay it waste. The subjugated tribes would rise against him once more, and the peoples cemented by his iron will would fall apart. Of the glory he had acquired for the Borjigin nothing would remain, and even the epithet "Mongol", which had become a title of honour, would probably be expunged. He was staking all, his life and his realm, upon one cast.

He spared no precaution to ensure a favourable result. There was peace on the frontiers, and beyond the frontiers there were everywhere allies. The country he trusted least, Hsi-Hsia, had been so much weakened that it was not likely to think of war for years; while if among the chieftains in his own land there were still a few lovers of freedom who obeyed him only because compelled, well, he was going to take them along with him, together with their sons, their relatives, and their warriors. All that he would leave behind would be a land thinly peopled by women, children, and old men. A very small force, numbering no more than 2,000 men, remained in the vast territory, while there went with him to China 200,000 riders.

The undertaking was too stupendous, the peril too great, for him to leave it to any shaman to ask a blessing of the gods, and the success of the war was too vital to be dependent upon the uncertain prophecies of a witch-doctor. Jenghiz himself, as Ssutu-Bogdo, the God-sent, would invoke the aid of the heavenly powers. While, outside, the people unceasingly appealed to Heaven, shouting "Tengri!", Jenghiz prayed alone in his tent, holding commune with the high gods. He explained to them that all he wanted was to take vengeance for the blood of his ancestors which had been shed by the Chinese. He recited the names of the Khans who in former days had suffered death at the hands of this ancient enemy, and enumerated the many onslaughts the townsmen had made upon the worthy nomadic peoples, the various breaches of faith committed by the crafty Kins. The Eternal Blue Heaven could not surely wish that the chosen people should enduringly suffer such wrong. That was why he was praying for the Eternal Blue Heaven to send all good spirits to his aid—but also all evil spirits as well, since their might was likewise enormous. Surely Heaven would command the peoples of the whole world to unite against the Kins.

For three days he fasted, neither eating nor drinking, but holding converse with the gods. On the fourth day the Khakan emerged from his tent and announced to the exultant multitude that Heaven had bestowed on him the boon of victory.

II

The army was preceded by scouts, dispatched in a fan-shaped formation, men whom nothing was to escape: no well, no place suitable for a night-camp, nor a hostile spy. Then came three strong corps under the best of his Orlok, Mukuli, Sabutai, and Jebei. Next, likewise in three divisions, the centre, the right wing, and the left wing, these constituting the main body. In this formation, the Mongolian army traversed the 450 miles which separated the Kerulen from the Chinese frontier, crossing the mountains, and marching over the eastern part of the Gobi Desert, without losing a man. There was no need for a rear-guard or for establishing lines of communication. The warriors had with them everything they required. Each rider had a spare horse. For food in the desert, herds of cattle were driven along. With forethought, the season of the melting of the snows had been chosen for the advance, since at this period of the year there was water as well as a sufficiency of fodder in the Gobi. As soon as they were in the enemy country, war would have to pay for war. The supplies of the Mongol armies always lay ahead of them, in the countries they were going to conquer.

The capital of the Kin Emperor was at Yen-king, later for many centuries Peking, and now Peiping. If Jenghiz intended anything more than a robber-raid, the capital was necessarily his goal, and in actual fact his advance-guard marched straight upon Peking, where two admirably defended walls, from thirty to sixty miles apart, were supposed to protect the plain of Peking against the onslaught of the savage peoples of the north.

Although the Chinese court gave out that the Empire was living in a state of profound peace, ample preparations had been made. Huge armies had been concentrated close to the capital, and, at the first tidings of the advance of the Mongols, they set out to arrest the barbarians in the passes, trap them among the skilfully placed fortresses, and annihilate the enemy in the difficult country between the two walls—when suddenly from the west came terrible news. The movement of the Mongol troops in the

north had been a feint. Without striking a blow, Jenghiz Khan had crossed the Great Wall with his main body; had crossed it 120 miles farther to the west, at a place where it was guarded only by Ongut mercenaries. Like a thunderbolt from a clear sky he had fallen upon the rich and fruitful province of Shan-si.

The imperial troops, therefore, instead of marching to the fortresses nearby, where they had hoped to annihilate the invaders, had to hasten through difficult mountains a long distance to the west, to a spot where (the advance-guard of the Mongols having likewise turned westward and, consisting of cavalry, moving much faster than the foot soldiers who constituted the bulk of the Chinese army could march) the Kins were simultaneously attacked in the front and the rear and completely routed. The dense formation of the Chinese infantry gave the Mongolian archers an easy target. The hail of arrows had a devastating effect, and not even the best foot soldiers in the world could have stood up against the mass pursuit of 200,000 fierce cavalrymen. In this first encounter the best army of the Kin Emperor was utterly destroyed, and Shan-si lay open to the invaders.

Jenghiz now divided his forces. That the Mongols might nourish themselves on the produce of the country, they had to be dispersed over spaces as wide as possible. There would be no danger in this if the liaison service worked satisfactorily, so that on the first appearance of a new hostile army they could concentrate at the threatened spot by spending one or two days on horseback. In actual fact, neither here nor in any of Jenghiz Khan's subsequent campaigns was communication between him and his generals ever interrupted, however far apart they might seem to be. The tactics of marching separately and fighting in unison were brought by him to the highest perfection, with the result that the Mongols were always turning up to surprise the enemy by effecting junctions at the most unlikely places, and yet, when a decisive battle occurred, all their armies were reunited.

Now three armies, under Jenghiz Khan's sons Juji, Jagatai, and Ogatai, spread out like a fan and invaded the rich province. Jenghiz, with his youngest son Tuli, surrounded the western

capital at Ta-tung-fu, having sent Jebei with a fifth army eastward to reconnoitre the passes leading into the plain of Peking.

When Jebei surprised a weakly defended pass and took it by storm, Jenghiz raised the siege of the western capital, and his three sons evacuated the fortresses and cities conquered by them, so that their father could lead the whole Mongolian avalanche across the low-lying plains of Eastern China up to the walls of Peking.

It was here, when faced by the immense town, that Jenghiz for the first time became genuinely aware of the formidable character of his almost crazy enterprise. What trenches, what moats, what walls! He rode round the fortress-city. How gigantic it was! He had never dreamed that any human settlement could be so enormous.

What was he to do? Surely he would never be able to take by storm these massive and imposing walls defended by hundreds of thousands of soldiers. He could never hope to become lord of Kin. It was a titanic realm of which this titanic city was the capital. He had already defeated four armies, each of which was more numerous than his own troops, and his spies informed him that fresh armies were hastening from every quarter. For six months now his horsemen had been ravaging the country, without getting beyond the boundaries of one single province, that of Shan-si. Now he himself and his forces had entered the equally large province of Chi-li. The Kin Empire contained a dozen such provinces. Whither was he to turn? Where should he begin his conquest?

There germinated within him the notion of relinquishing the scheme as impracticable. Kin as a whole was not to be coerced, and he had achieved other important objects. He had defeated the Emperor's best armies; his Mongols had secured vast quantities of booty and vast numbers of slaves; they had enormously enhanced the importance of the Khakan. Jebei, in his latest advance eastward, had reached the end of the world, the place where it passed into the sea. What more could Jenghiz want? He was a conqueror; but if he now began a siege, and later had to abandon it without taking Peking, he would lose prestige.

Jenghiz and his armies turned their faces homeward.

Perhaps it would be better not to return yet awhile into Mongolia, but to winter somewhere near at hand, keeping watch over the doings of the Chinese. He could not make up his mind whether to winter in Chi-li, in Shan-si, or on the Mongolian side of the Great Wall.

III

The army was already withdrawing when a Chinese general entered the camp.

The barbarians' victories had aroused consternation in court circles at Peking. It was hard upon eighty years since China had suffered any such invasion by plunderers. Hitherto the robbers had always fled directly the imperial troops appeared upon the scene, but now they seemed to be spoiling for a fight, for hardly did an army show itself than the nomads flocked to attack it from all sides. Their chieftain was incalculable. At length he was outside the walls of the capital, and the defenders looked for an attempt to take it by storm, hoping that a reverse with heavy losses would teach the barbarians the advantage of being content with rich gifts, and that they would return home. But the Khakan would not allow any of his riders to approach within bow-shot of the walls. From a distance they could be seen galloping round the town. Now, without any negotiations, without presenting any demands, they were retreating. What had the man got in his head? Whither was he going? The Chinese decided that it would be better to parley.

Let the general sent to negotiate sound the Khan as to his intentions, say that Wei-Wang was astonished by his behaviour. Surely the Mongols and the Kins were at peace? Jenghiz Khan was the Chao-churi of the Emperor, the Warden of the Marches. Why, then, had he invaded Kin?

Jenghiz Khan was himself surprised by the embassy. He had laid waste two of the most flourishing provinces of the Empire, and yet the mighty ruler expressed his belief that peace prevailed.

The whole of the extensive country with its almost impregnable fortresses and gigantic cities still obeyed its lawful ruler, who now, instead of marshalling his forces asked the invader why he had made an unprovoked attack. Was there some fundamental weakness in Kin which had escaped him?

Jenghiz received the general with appropriate honours, and began to question him.

The envoy had been badly chosen, for he disclosed to the Khakan the internal condition of the Empire.

The Kin Emperors, though they had ruled Northern China for nearly a hundred years, were still regarded by the Chinese as usurpers. Even though they had unified the country, had made successful war upon the South Chinese realm of the Sungs, taking away from it all the provinces that lay immediately to the south of the Hoang-ho, and even though they had thoroughly adopted Chinese manners and customs, they were barbarians from the north, from Manchuria, who had overthrown the Liao Dynasty, and they had never been recognised by the Chinese as legitimate rulers. The people looked upon them as oppressors, considered themselves to be enslaved, and would never love the upstarts. In the south, the Sung Emperors were their enemies; to the north-east, between Yen-king and Korea, was Khitan, the homeland of the Liao Dynasty, and there a prince of that dynasty was still living—though as no more than a vassal of the Kin Emperors. If Jenghiz Khan was willing to help the Liao Dynasty to regain its rights, this general, being himself of the Liao family, was ready to enter the Mongol's service. Many others throughout the country held the same view.

Jenghiz carefully considered his position. His riders could get the better of any Kin army in the open field, but they were not able to take these huge fortresses, or, if they succeeded in taking them, to hold them. Any Mongolian garrison would be lost in this flood of men. But what if he could win over the popular masses with the aid of the Liaos? Why should not the Liaos be regents under his overlordship?

His decision was made. The war was to be continued. He

remained neither in Chi-li nor in Shan-si, but marched northward. To the north was the system of double walls which had been intended to prevent his incursion into China. Contemplated from within they were far less awesome, and between the inner and the outer Great Wall were the countless imperial brood-mares, from whom came the chargers used by the Kin cavalry. With one blow he got possession of these brood-mares, so that he no longer felt any anxiety about providing his own riders with remounts, while he cut off the supply of horses for the Kin army. Thenceforward the Emperor would be able to place few besides foot soldiers in the field against him, men whom he could disperse with his own swift cavalymen whenever and wherever he pleased.

He settled down for the winter outside the Great Wall, sufficiently far away to be free from a surprise attack, and he sent a delegation to the Prince of Liao in Khitan.

IV

In the spring of 1212, a rising of the Liaos occurred in Khitan, while Jenghiz Khan simultaneously began to lay waste the Kin provinces northward of the Great Wall. He defeated the army sent against him, and, upon the heels of the flying Chinese, he recrossed the Great Wall to appear once more in Shan-si. Here an unpleasant surprise awaited him. During the winter the towns had been occupied in reorganising their defences; the fortresses he had destroyed had been rebuilt; he must begin his conquest all over again.

To force a speedy decision, he left the smaller places undisturbed, and invested the capital of the province, the western imperial residence of Ta-tung-fu. Chinese reinforcements were promptly sent, and as promptly beaten. Then he tried to take the fortress by storm, but the city was impregnable to the onslaughts of his riders. When he himself led one of the storming parties, he was wounded by an arrow.

Now disagreeable news arrived from Khitan. Imperial troops had appeared there, putting down rebellion, defeating the rebels, and threatening the Liao Prince himself.

The Kin Empire was too strong for him.

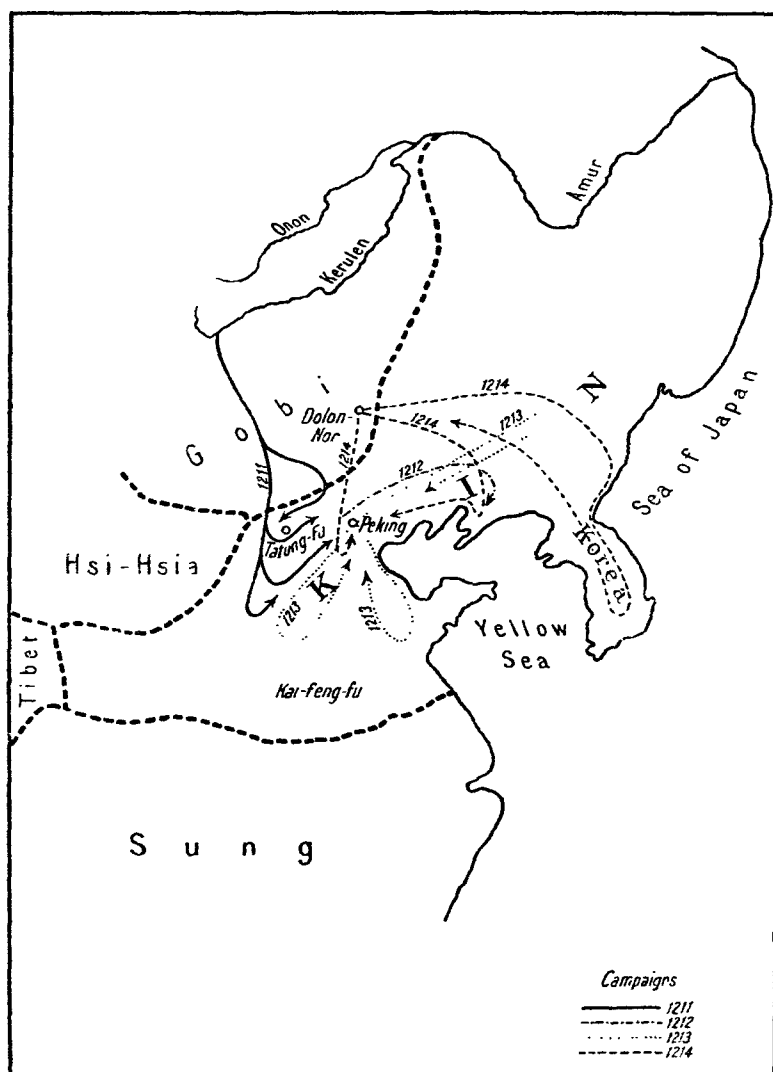
Any other chieftain would have given up the game as hopeless, and would have retired to the safety of the steppes. But what Jenghiz had planned to do a year before, now seemed out of the question, for in the interim he had gained allies, and had told them of his intention to overthrow the Kin Empire. He must fight the struggle to the bitter end.

Retiring once more beyond the Great Wall, he began, with his Mongols, to practise the art of siege. To the aid of the Prince of Liao, he sent Jebei Noyon with several tumans. During a winter campaign, Jebei met in various engagements the imperial armies in Khitan, and endeavoured to take the eastern capital Liao-yang. But he failed to do so, just as Jenghiz had failed in his attack on the western capital Ta-tung-fu. These fortresses proved impregnable against the Mongols.

Then he tried the favourite Mongolian tactics. Spreading a rumour that a relief army was on the way from the Kin Empire, he raised the siege, and commanded so rapid a retreat that he actually left his baggage and his tents beneath the walls of Liao-yang. Having continued the withdrawal for two days, he then provided his riders with fresh mounts, and traversed the whole distance back to the city in a single night. His ruse proved successful, for he found the garrison and some of the non-combatant population plundering his abandoned camp, while all the gates stood wide open. He rode down the looters, and took the town by storm.

As a result of this Mongol success, the Khitan Prince, who had been wavering, now declared himself King of Liao-tung and placed his kingdom under the protectorate of Jenghiz Khan.

Next spring, the Mongols organised a more serious onslaught. The third campaign opened with a systematic conquest of the northern provinces. No city, large or small, was overlooked. In their attacks on the less strongly fortified places, the Mongols



THE WAR IN CHINA

learned how to deal with the more formidable walled towns. Jenghiz Khan's youngest son Tuli and his son-in-law Chiki set the example, by being the first to scale the walls. His other sons and his generals fought in the mountain passes, which they took one after another. At length, the pledge given by the Liao general sent to Jenghiz as negotiator by the Kin Emperor, was fulfilled. Now that it had become plain that the Mongol invasion was no mere robber raid but a carefully planned conquest, various generals of Khitan deserted to Jenghiz Khan with all their commands.

Soon he was not only master of Shan-si, but was able to block the entrances into the plain of Peking.

At this moment, when the danger grew continually greater, in the "middle capital" a palace revolution broke out.

The Kin Emperor, during the days of greatest need, had issued the usual decrees of amnesty, and had re-appointed cashiered generals. One of these, Hu-sha-hu, the eunuch, whom the Emperor had reinstated in command of an army, suddenly occupied Peking, killed the governor, stormed the Imperial Palace, and murdered Yuen-chi.

Jenghiz, breaking off the various actions in which he was engaged, hastened to Peking, fully expecting that the gates of the fortress would now be opened to him. What could this revolution be other than a revolution of the supporters of the Liao Dynasty? He did not know that the Khitans of the Liao Dynasty were regarded by the bulk of the Chinese as strangers and foreigners, just as were the Manchus of the Kin Dynasty. The Liaos, like the Kins, had been alien conquerors three hundred years before, and, like all the conquerors of China, had absorbed the manners, customs, and mode of thought of the conquered people, which accepted them without apparent demur, and, under the dynasts' generals, fought for them against new conquerors, so long as "Heaven still gave them dominion over the Middle Kingdom". But the Chinese proper never recognised these foreign rulers as genuine Chinese.

The eunuch Hu-sha-hu was as far from being a supporter of the Liaos as he was from favouring the "northern barbarians".

His revolution was a private affair. After having slain Yuen-chi, he declared himself commander-in-chief of the Kin troops, and set up as emperor a man he regarded with favour, a prince of the Kin dynasty who ruled as Hsuan-tsung. Then he took the field against Jenghiz Khan.

Just outside Peking, in the neighbourhood of a ford, he made a surprise attack upon the Khakan. Although lamed in one leg, Hu-sha-hu the eunuch himself directed operations from a wheel-chair, with the result that for the first time since the opening of the Chinese War, the Mongols were beaten. This was the second and last defeat in the life of Jenghiz Khan. It was only owing to the tardiness of action on the part of the Chinese flanking troops under General Kao-chi that the Mongols were saved from complete annihilation, so that Jenghiz was able to effect a fairly orderly retreat.

Hu-sha-hu wished to execute the sluggard General Kao-chi whose delay had robbed him of the fruits of victory; but the new Emperor Hsuan-tsung espoused the general's cause, and Hu-sha-hu therefore gave the offender a second chance. Being himself too ill to continue personal leadership of operations, the eunuch provided Kao-chi with reinforcements, and ordered him to make a fresh attack upon the Mongols.

Kao-chi obeyed orders, fighting with desperate courage, but Jenghiz had marshalled his forces once more and had called up reserves. Battle raged for a day and a night, being stubbornly fought. Then Kao-chi was repulsed, and driven back into the suburbs of Peking.

He knew that this time Hu-sha-hu would give him short shrift, so he took time by the forelock. At the head of his retreating forces, he stormed the palace of the commander-in-chief.

Hu-sha-hu tried to flee, but got his legs entangled in his robes, and fell. Kao-chi caught him, decapitated him, and, accompanied by his soldiers, taking with him Hu-sha-hu's head, made for the Imperial Palace, where the new Emperor Hsuan-tsung was established.

With the bleeding trophy in his hands, he begged the Emperor to judge between him and the dead commander-in-chief.

The general's threat was plain enough. His soldiers surrounded the Imperial Palace; and Hsuan-tsung was no more a hero than the last emperor had been. He therefore suddenly called to mind that Hu-sha-hu had been a rebel, a slayer of emperors, who had usurped the title of field marshal; and this recreant emperor therefore deprived the man who had set him on the throne, and the only man who had proved able to inflict a defeat upon the Mongols, posthumously of all titles and dignities. His offences were publicly proclaimed, Kao-chi was praised for the murder, and appointed commander-in-chief in Hu-sha-hu's place. The soldiers who had stormed Hu-sha-hu's palace were rewarded.

These events took place while Jenghiz Khan was at the gates of Peking, and was still finding the fortress impregnable.

Soon he was seized with wrath. Did these Chinese think they could despise him because they were sitting behind strong walls? Could they go on chaffering with one another as if he, Jenghiz Khan, were not in the country? Did the Kin Empire so little realise that it was at war? He would soon show them that he was in earnest.

Jenghiz Khan had no further thought of retiring into winter quarters nor would he order his Mongols to break their heads in the vain attempt to batter down impregnable fortresses. He divided his forces, including the forty-six Chinese divisions which, under various generals, had come over to his side, into three armies, and sent one of these armies under the command of his brother Kasar eastward into southern Manchuria. The second, in three divisions under his three elder sons, was dispatched southward across the plateau of Shan-si; while he himself, with his son Tuli and the middle army, marched south-eastward towards Shan-tung through the low-lying plain of China.

The Mongols spent the whole autumn and winter pillaging, murdering, and burning, in three great streams that ravaged the realm of the Kins. Flaming houses, depopulated towns, and smoking ruins marked their passage.

The Chinese generals barricaded themselves within their fortresses, and summoned the peasants of the neighbourhood to come to their defence. Thereupon Jenghiz Khan commanded that the old men, the women, and the children who had been left in the villages should be seized and driven in front of his own troops when they advanced to take a city by storm. The peasants refused to shoot at their own fathers, wives, and children, to use fiery missiles, or fling burning pitch. They would not fight.

Only a few places whose garrisons promptly went over to the side of the Mongols were spared. All the others were razed to the ground. In less than six months, ninety enclosed and fortified towns had been sacked and burned. As far as the Hoang-ho, which in those days debouched into the Yellow Sea southward of the promontory of Shan-tung, there remained only eleven fortresses which, having still proved impregnable, though invested, arose like islands. The whole country had been laid waste. Famine and pestilence spread in the train of the Mongol invaders; the corpses of the slain lay unburied in the fields or floated down the rivers. This was the upshot of the wrath of Jenghiz Khan.

In the spring he issued orders to his armies to return, and unite outside the walls of Peking. But as they were on their way back through the devastated area, they themselves were smitten by pestilence. The Mongolian armies which reassembled outside Peking were much weaker and less splendid than they had been when they set out.

Nevertheless the army leaders, flushed with victory, intoxicated by the vast spoils which year after year had been brought into Mongolia in endless caravans, were insisting that the Khakan, as the crown to his victories, should lead them to take Peking by storm.

Jenghiz Khan rejected this idea. He realised that, even if he could take Peking, he would never be able to hold it, any more than he could conquer this great realm with its 50,000,000 inhabitants. What did it matter to him whether a member of the Liao Dynasty or a member of the Kin Dynasty should rule over it? China had been sufficiently weakened and humiliated. Besides,

the pestilences which had affected his own troops as well as the Chinese were a sign from Heaven, a warning.

He therefore sent an envoy to Emperor Hsuan-tsung, to say: "All the provinces of your realm northward of the Yellow River are in my hands. You have nothing left but your capital. To this weakness Heaven has reduced you. Were I, in your extremity, to push you yet farther, what would Heaven say to me? I fear Heaven's wrath, and therefore prefer to withdraw my army. Can you not make some gift to my generals which will content them with this decision?"

A crown council was held in Peking. The usual experience of China had been that only the weaker of two contending parties offered peace to the other, and Field Marshal Kao-chi declared that the time had come for a decisive battle, since Jenghiz Khan's troops were exhausted and their horses must be weak. But the ministers were strongly opposed to this plan. It was crazy to talk of further struggles. For years they had done nothing but fight. What had been the result? Their best army had been wiped out. They had sent a second, a third, a tenth. All, all had been annihilated. They shut themselves up in fortified towns behind big walls. The places were taken by storm and burned. The most elaborate machinery of war, the mighty fighting engines, even such terrible instruments as those which hurled explosive fire—these Mongolian devils regarded with contempt. Whatever defensive measures had been tried, had turned out ill. Were they to increase the anger of the enemy by rejecting offers of peace?

Emperor Hsuan-tsung, therefore, dispatched one of the ministers of state to Jenghiz to open peace negotiations.

The Kin Empire promised a general amnesty. The Khitan Prince should be recognised as the independent ruler of Liao-tung (Jenghiz had never left his allies in the lurch or failed to fulfil his pledges to them). As a sign of Hsuan-tsung's genuine will to peace, he would give the Khakan a daughter of the late Emperor Yuen-chi in marriage. She should be provided with suitable equipment and a sufficient train.

Peace was signed, and towards the end of spring 1214, three years after his first great incursion into the Kin Empire, Jenghiz Khan set out for home, being accompanied as far as the frontier by the imperial minister. Never again was the first Khakan to set foot upon the soil of China.

He had good reason to be gratified with his success. Neither the Great Wall of China nor the fortified passes nor the mountains nor the enormous walls of the fortress-cities, had been able to save the population of a fifty-million empire from the two hundred thousand Mongolian riders. The Kin Empire had been defeated and devastated, so that decades would be needed for its reconstruction. Jenghiz Khan had no longer any reason to be anxious about the intrigues of the Chinese. They would be very slow, in future, to pick a quarrel with him.

For a moment he was detained by a new problem on the frontier. What was he to do with the tens of thousands of prisoners whom, during the campaign, he had employed on forced labour digging trenches for his attacks on the fortresses? They might be carriers of pestilence. It would be impossible to transport the bulk of them across the Gobi Desert, nor would it be advisable to send them to their homes, for they had learned too much about the Mongolian art of war and might become dangerous adversaries if they were enrolled in the Emperor's armies. Well, Jenghiz cared little whether Chinese lived or died. He commanded that the skilled handicraftsmen, the artists, and the men of learning should be spared, but that all the others should be killed.

V

It was too late in the season to cross the Gobi, which is exceedingly hot in summer, so Jenghiz encamped on the marge of the desert, in the oasis of Dolon-nor.

The first news which reached here from China was that Emperor Hsuan-tsung had issued a proclamation to his people

informing them that he was removing his residence from Peking to the southern capital on the other side of the Yellow River, to the place which is now called Kai-feng fu. The most urgent representations of his ministers had been unable to convince him that his departure would be regarded as a flight and as a surrender of the northern provinces. The Emperor's determination to get farther away from the Mongols was fixed, and his intentions were supported by his chief adviser, Field Marshal Kao-chi, who was himself to accompany the sovereign to the south. To quiet the populace, and as a sign that the Emperor still thought about the welfare of the northern provinces, the proclamation expressly declared that the Crown Prince and Prince Wan-yen, the military commandant, were to stay in Peking.

"He does not trust my word," indignantly exclaimed Jenghiz Khan when these tidings came to hand. The Khakan added thoughtfully "He has only made peace in order to undertake conquest in the south."

As if in confirmation of these words, an envoy of the Sung Emperor reached the Mongol camp. This messenger, making a wide detour, had come to acquaint Jenghiz Khan with his master's anxiety concerning the intentions of Hsuan-tsung.

In the Sung Empire the victories of the Mongols had been celebrated almost as if they had been personal ones, for the defeat of the Kin ruler was regarded as Heaven's just punishment for the wars which the Kins had made upon the Sung, robbing the latter of the provinces to the south of the Yellow River and imposing a tribute.

The year before, the Sung ruler had for the first time dared to withhold the annual "gifts" of 250,000 ounces of gold and 250,000 pieces of silk. Now, of a sudden, the Mongols had withdrawn, and the Kin court was being moved a long stretch southward, to establish itself close to the Sung frontier. It was easy to understand why anxiety prevailed in the southern empire, and the envoy had been dispatched to ascertain, if he could, the precise intentions of the Mongolian monarch, and to show him

how dangerous it would be to allow the Kins to re-establish their power.

The minister from a highly civilised country where literature and the arts flourished, the mandarin from a court whose splendour, prosperity, and etiquette were enormously developed (so that even the Kin Emperors were regarded as upstarts and barbarians), needed some time before he could grow accustomed to the conditions prevailing at Dolon-nor. He inquired carefully about the details of the ceremonial to be observed at the audience, and was told that on entering the tent he must not tread on the threshold, nor must he subsequently lean against the pillars which supported the great marquee, for the punishment was death, and in any case, pending sentence, he would immediately be flogged by the guardsmen.

The gorgeously robed ambassador had to walk between two fires, the disciple of Confucius being told that thereby he would be cleansed from all evil.

The magnificent presents he was bringing to the Mongolian ruler had also to be carried between these fires, although thereby the costly and delicate stuffs were singed.

Then for seven days they had to lie beneath the open sky, to be shown to the gods, even though the sun and the wind bleached their colours, so that many valuable textiles intended only for the shelter of the imperial palaces were destroyed.

At length he was allowed to enter the marquee. Everything within was bathed in a strange twilight, the only illumination coming through a round hole in the middle of the top of the tent and between the open curtains of the entry. Directly opposite the latter, at the far end of the marquee, was a huge wooden platform, draped with carpets, on which stood the throne of the Khakan and the Chinese princess. Near the throne, at a somewhat lower level, were half a dozen lesser wives. In an enormous circle, upon stools and benches, were the princes, army leaders, and other notables, while facing them were the women brought from conquered Kin—women whom the Mongol aristocrats had taken to wife. All were much ornamented,

over-dressed, wearing jewels and gold trinkets. At the entry, on one side, were mighty tables, which groaned beneath the burden of gold and silver goblets filled with koumiss and sauce-pans containing boiled meat. On the other side was an orchestra of about twenty of the best Chinese lute-players. On the throne in the half-light, towering over the assembly, was the imposing figure of Jenghiz Khan who was the only person present to wear no trinket. Whenever the Khakan stretched out his hand for his drinking-cup, the musicians began to play, and there was a tumult throughout the tent as the men and women rose to their feet, danced, and clapped their hands. The whole picture was uncanny and barbaric.

The envoy from the Sung ruler found it hard, in this environment, to state his commission in carefully chosen phrases with the usual courtly flourishes. It was a relief to him that the Khakan let him finish his address without further ado, and had the message interpreted without any sort of interruption.

Then came a pause, and Jenghiz Khan's reserved countenance, his unfathomable glance, betrayed nothing of his thoughts. The only answer was that the ambassador could have as much koumiss as he liked. He was motioned to a seat on the left, where the women were. But this could not have been intended as an affront, for he was on a higher level than the floor, close beside the Khan of Khans' wives. He could drink rice-beer with them, and talk to them in his own tongue, and whenever he drank the musicians struck up and the Mongolian warriors danced in front of him.

But still not a word was said about his message. Neither that day, nor later. His mission seemed to have been forgotten. No council was summoned, and no new audience was held.

The Khakan had not declared his will, and vainly did the envoy, after the manner of the Chinese, try to glean from the courtiers something about the intentions of the Mongols. The Mongols had no intentions.

They rode, they practised archery, they went hawking, and, on the great square in front of the marquee, they played ball

with their sovereign. The Chinese envoy could watch it all from his own tent. He saw Jenghiz Khan's imposing figure as he rivalled his princes and Orlok in running after the ball, seizing it, throwing it—and laughing like a merry child when he made a better throw than the others.

At length the envoy managed to arrange that the Khakan should meet him when out riding. Jenghiz Khan reined in his mount, and the interpreter translated: "Why don't you come and play ball with us? We have been having a splendid game."

The amazed ambassador stammeringly replied that he had not had the honour of receiving an invitation.

"Why should you bother about an invitation? If you want to come, just come."

When, thereupon, the envoy came to the evening banquet, he was punished for his previous absence by being given so much rice-beer to drink that he had to be carried back to his tent. The next time he actually succeeded in saying a few words to the Khakan about the anxieties of the Sung court, but the answer was curt and repellent.

"I have made peace with Hsuan-tsung."

VI

A few months only had elapsed after three years of devastation and murderous warfare, only a few months of peace, but in this brief time the Kin Empire had collected its forces.

Wan-yen, the energetic commandant of Peking, aided by the Crown Prince who was eager for action, had been able to organise a national resistance in the northern provinces. The towns that had been destroyed were rebuilt, their walls of hewn stone towered once more. New armies arose out of nothing and marched towards Khitan, although the independence of the Prince of Liao-tung had been one of the stipulations of the peace treaty. During the battle that ensued it became plain that the Kin Empire had not lost its warlike spirit nor its power to

strike. Within a few weeks the troops of the monarch of Khitan were defeated, his capital Liao-yang was taken, and he himself driven out.

Part of the imperial body-guard which accompanied Hsuan-tung on his southward march from Peking consisted of men from Khitan. As soon as they reached Kai-feng fu, the Emperor commanded them to hand over their horses and equipment. They knew that this was a mere preliminary to their being disbanded, so they refused to obey. Having mutinied, they slew their commanding officer and elected a new one, who instantly turned his coat and marched back to the north.

Government troops were sent in pursuit and other detachments barred their way—but at this juncture the Khitans sent a delegation to Jenghiz informing him that they regarded themselves as his vassals and begged his help.

This was a turning-point. Hitherto Jenghiz Khan had hesitated to intervene, or even to send help to the luckless Prince of Liao. But now Chinese troops placed themselves under his orders. They were no longer on the side of either Kin or Liao, but on the side of the Mongols. Was he to allow them to be destroyed? He saw how strong the Kin Empire still was, and how quickly it had recovered from crushing defeat. If he allowed events to take their natural course, within a few months a new and yet mightier Kin Empire would be established, all the more menacing because now it had become aware of the strength of the Mongols and would do its utmost to crush these dangerous neighbours.

Mukuli was sent to the aid of the King of Liao; Sabutai was commissioned to reconnoitre in Manchuria, the original home of the Kin dynasts; a third army rode southward to assist the insurrectionary guardsmen.

Sabutai crossed Manchuria, reached the coast, marched southward along it, and brought the Khakan the surrender of the monarch of Korea.

Mukuli found Liao-tung already in the hands of Kin troops, and a viceroy from Kai-feng fu was on the way thither. Mukuli attacked the Chinese soldiers, occupied the roads leading to the

capital Liao-yang, captured the Kin viceroy and gave his authorisation to a general who had gone over to the side of Jenghiz. This general came in state to the palace, had himself installed with all possible pomp, took over the reins of government, sent the officers on furlough, and opened the gates of the city to the Mongols. Mukuli was in the mind to punish Liao-yang severely for having revolted against the Liao monarch, but the Chinese general managed to convince him that by clemency he would win the confidence of the Khitans. When Mukuli followed this excellent advice, a number of other Khitan towns went over to the Mongols, and in a trice the whole kingdom of Liao was purged of Kin troops.

The third Mongolian army, having fought their way to the rebel guardsmen, fraternised with them, conquered the passes leading to Peking, and appeared once more before the gates of the city. But before the investment of the capital had been effected, orders from Hsuan-tsung arrived, to the effect that the Crown Prince was immediately to leave the Middle Capital and to join the Emperor at Kai-feng fu.

Vainly did Prince Wan-yen, who, in conjunction with the Crown Prince, had been the soul of the resistance, endeavour to dissuade his coadjutor from the journey. Vainly did he warn the Crown Prince that his departure for Kai-feng fu would give the signal for a general rebellion in the northern provinces and would produce chaos. The other generals and dignitaries demanded that the imperial rescript should be obeyed.

"Do you guarantee your ability to hold the city against the invaders?" they asked the commandant.

Wan-yen could give no such guarantee. During the brief interval of peace the huge city had been but scantily provisioned out of the environing countryside. A scarcity of food was already manifest. But the Crown Prince would surely be able to send supplies from Kai-feng fu.

He departed, and throughout the northern provinces the predicted chaos began. Various provinces and towns declared themselves independent. Their governors assumed royal dignity.

Some went over to Jenghiz Khan, to fall away from him as soon as a chance offered. They fought against one another, against the Mongols, against the troops still loyal to the Emperor.

Mukuli was given supreme command, with instructions to break the resistance. During the autumn and winter, his Mongols took more than eight hundred towns and villages, some of which were destroyed, while others were left intact under the command of Chinese governors.

But Peking, despite famine and pestilence, resisted stoutly throughout the winter. One after another the relief armies sent from the south were defeated by the Mongols, but Wan-yen continued to hold Peking. When, in the spring, the last army bringing supplies of food in haste from Kai-feng fu was intercepted and destroyed, and there seemed no further hope of rescue, Wan-yen proposed a last desperate sally of the whole garrison, staking all upon one hazard, to die if needs must, arms in hand. But the other generals refused to obey.

Thereupon Wan-yen left the war council and went to his own palace. He wrote a letter to Hsuan-tsung describing the situation in the capital which had been entrusted to him, reminded the Emperor of his earlier warnings, and accused Field Marshal Kao-chi, Hsuan-tsung's chief adviser, of treason. Then he begged his master to forgive him for having failed to carry out the orders to save Peking. Entrusting this letter to a faithful servant who, after the fall of Peking, carried it to Kai-feng fu, Wan-yen bade farewell to his relatives and retainers, distributed his remaining worldly possessions among them, and took poison.

Next night the general who had been Wan-yen's deputy fled the palace with his mistress, leaving the place and the imperial women to the mercy of the Chinese garrison which had already begun to ravage and to loot.

With 5,000 Mongols and the Chinese soldiers who had entered his service, Mukuli now entered the mighty fortress against which Jenghiz Khan himself with the whole Mongolian army had twice vainly done his best.

But even when this news came to hand, Jenghiz did not

stir from the oasis of Dolon-nor. The Kin Empire no longer interested him. Its population of townsfolk were different beings from his nomads, and permanent association with them could only harm the Mongols. The Chinese seemed to be people willing to serve one man one day, another man the next, ready to turn their coats at any moment, and to betray both sides, thinking only of personal advancement and personal possessions. Such men were not to be trusted. He would enter into no community with them, as he had made his Mongols enter into community with the Keraits, Uighurs, and Naimans—for those who had commerce with the Chinese would lose the supreme virtues of the riders of the steppes: reckless courage, contempt for death, loyalty to the tribe and its ruler.

The Chinese were shrewd, and might become dangerous, so they must be kept in subjection. They trembled for their property and their lives, so they must be ruled by giving them cause for continued anxiety about their property and their lives. Besides, they could make a great many things which the nomads urgently needed, so these things should be taken from them. He sent Shigi Kutuku to Peking to bring the treasures of the Imperial Palace to Mongolia.

The representative of the Khakan was received with the highest honours. The various courtiers endeavoured, each after his manner, to win the emissary's favour by munificent gifts. The master of the horse brought him splendid mounts, the keepers of the imperial wardrobe sent rich brocades; the guardians of art treasures proffered golden chalices.

At the arrival of each new present, Shigi Kutuku had a fresh outburst of enthusiasm.

"Is this all from the Imperial Palace?" he asked finally.

"Yes, yes," the courtiers hastened to declare. "Where else would your poor servants find such costly articles?"

"In that case," explained Shigi Kutuku, "they belong to the Emperor." He went on: "And now, since we are the conquerors, they belong to our Khakan. How could you dare to think of giving me anything that belongs to the Khakan?"

For weeks heavily laden caravans set out from Peking, conveying the treasures of the Imperial Palace, all carefully listed, to the camp in the oasis of Dolon-nor. With every caravan, likewise, went a number of "useful" men, also catalogued by name and profession. They were artists, astrologers, philosophers, engineers, handicraftsmen.

One day Jenghiz Khan, examining these new arrivals, was struck by the appearance of a tall man with a long black beard. He was catalogued as Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai, sage and astrologer, a scion of the Liao family.

"The House of Liao and the House of Kin have always been enemies," said Jenghiz. "I have avenged you."

"My father, my grandfather, and I myself were servants of the House of Kin," answered Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai. "I should be a liar and a hypocrite if I were to cherish hostile feelings towards my father and my Emperor."

This answer pleased Jenghiz Khan. A man who had preserved a proper pride amid the townsfolk, who was willing to serve though not from fear and not to gain advantage, but simply from loyalty and conviction, must be a man of mark. He engaged this prisoner in a conversation.

When they finished talking, Jenghiz invited Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai to enter his service, as soothsayer and adviser.

After this conversation, Jenghiz Khan modified his opinions somewhat. Those among the townsfolk who had preserved their characters must be reckoned as among the noblest of mankind. It was a pity that their doings were so often incomprehensible. How, for instance, could the example of Wan-yen, the loyal commandant of Peking, counterbalance the treachery of all the other generals? Besides, Wan-yen, with the few who remained loyal, should have gone on fighting to the last, for then Jenghiz Khan would assuredly have commanded him to be taken alive, and would have asked him, as he asked Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai, to enter the service of the Great Khan. Wan-yen would have been re-appointed governor of Peking, and perhaps of all Kin. . . . Of course no one should fear death, but

why should a man kill himself? This passed Jenghiz Khan's understanding.

VII

The Kin Emperor sued for peace.

"When the chamois and the stags have been killed, and only a hare is left alive, why should one not give him his liberty?" said the Khakan.

But the conditions were unacceptable. The Emperor was to cede all territories north of the Yellow River, was to renounce his imperial title, and was to become King of Ho-nan as vassal of Jenghiz Khan.

The war went on.

In the autumn, Jenghiz sent an army to the south. It was defeated, and had to retreat across the ice on the Yellow River. A number of remote towns rebelled. Partisan warfare seemed imminent, a long campaign of detrition against the almost innumerable inhabitants of the Kin Empire. Still, this would not need the presence of the Khakan, and there was alarming news from Mongolia.

Guchluk, the Naiman prince, son of Baibuka Tayan, who, after the victory of the Mongols in the Altai Mountains, had fled to the court of the Emperor of Kara-Khitai, had now himself become sovereign of that country. There was a ferment of revolt among the Naimans, unrest and anxiety among the Uighurs.

In the summer of 1216, therefore, the Khakan, with his whole army, and a vast amount of loot, marched to his horde beside the Onon. In Kin he left Mukuli with 23,000 Mongols and 20,000 Khitan troops; and he was to take command of all the armies which, in the future, might submit to him. Mukuli was appointed viceroy over the whole of the Kin Empire, Korea, and the Kingdom of Liao. Bidding him farewell, Jenghiz said:

"I have conquered the lands north of the Ho-shan Mountains. It is for you to do the same with the countries south of these Mountains."

CHAPTER VIII

THE WORLD IN THE WEST

I

JENGHIZ KHAN'S return to Mongolia signified far more than the return of a ruler to his country. A whole nation accompanied him on the homeward march. All the hordes of the Mongolian plateau as far as Lake Baikal and the Altai Mountains were now to be re peopled after having been almost void of men for five years, and the riders brought with them loot of unexampled splendour to store in their tents. Everything which nomads ere this had hitherto secured in their raids was pitiful when compared with the wealth which these warriors brought with them. Slaves of both sexes, horses and camels charged with loads as heavy as could be carried—such things had hitherto been seen only at the feasts of princes. Now every Mongol could live the life of a prince; every Mongol was rich; every Mongol had an abundance of servants and slaves. The families of the warriors who had fallen in China were given a share, just as if the soldiers were still alive. There was no end of jubilation and feasting. When listening to the stories told round the camp fire, the old men cursed their age, while the youths who, during their fathers' absence, had grown to early manhood, longed to have taken part in such struggles and adventures.

The nomads were very different folk from townsmen. Few of them were mainly concerned with enjoyment, or with clinging to life and property; few of them were weary of fighting. There was not one of them who regarded ease and prosperity as the fundamental aims of existence. Their heaven-sent Jenghiz, Khan of Khans, had taught them how to enjoy a manly life of

battle and slaughter, and they had no other wish than to continue it without end.

Jenghiz Khan's words had been: "The greatest joy a man can know is to conquer his enemies and drive them before him. To ride their horses and take away their possessions. To see the faces of those who were dear to them bedewed with tears, and to clasp their wives and daughters in his arms." For generations these words were graven into the minds of a whole people, and determined its behaviour. The mutual hostilities of the tribes had long since been forgotten. The war in China had lasted five years. For five years the tribes and clans of Mongolia were left to themselves unguarded and unwatched, and yet during the whole time there was not a single rising, nor did any group fall away. In common battles and victories, their blood had become that of a united people, a people of horsemen and warriors, whose tribes and kinships had only one ambition, to distinguish themselves in the eyes of Jenghiz Khan.

All the energies which, for many generations, had been devoted to mutual feuds, were now, disciplined and intensified, a tool in the hands of the Khakan, ready at every moment to pour itself like a torrent across any country to which he might point.

But however light the worth of human life was in general to Jenghiz Khan, he did his utmost to spare his Mongolian warriors, and praised every commander who had fulfilled his task "while avoiding overwork for his men or his horses". When he now commissioned Juji, on the way to the territories which had been granted to him in the north-west, to destroy the Merkits, who had once more assembled in their forests, and, during the absence of the army in China, had troubled Mongolia by border raids—he assigned his eldest son the crafty Orlok Sabutai as chief of General Staff, but gave no accessory troops. And when he sent Jebei Noyon against the mighty realm of Kara-Khitai, he appointed for this purpose no more than 20,000 men.

Kara-Khitai was large and powerful, and had many populous cities. Its armies were brave, experienced in war, and had often done more than hold their own in contest with the nomad hordes of the east and the north and with the fighters of Islam. Yet Jebei, with only 20,000 Mongolian riders, was now to call to account this valiant realm, which extended across twenty degrees of longitude.

But Jenghiz Khan, during the war in China, had been kept well informed by his General Staff and its spies as to what was going on in Kara-Khitai.

Guchluk, the Naiman prince, in flight before the Mongols, married a granddaughter of the Emperor of Kara-Khitai. Then, with the help of that ruler, he assembled the remnants of the Naimans around himself, and, at the head of this Naiman army, attacked his grandfather who was upon a hunting expedition, and took him prisoner. At first he ruled Kara-Khitai in the prisoner's name, and then, after the latter's death, he himself ascended the throne. His rule was harsh and cruel. For love of his young wife, Guchluk, formerly a Nestorian, became a Lamaist, and persecuted the Moslems, who comprised the bulk of the urban population of the empire. He closed the mosques, confiscated their property, put strong garrisons in the towns, and levied contributions from the inhabitants for the support of the soldiers.

When Jenghiz Khan sent Jebei against Kara-Khitai with no more than a force of 20,000 men, he was counting upon the dissatisfaction of the population; and, while, as usual, mainly giving Jebei a free hand as to the conduct of the campaign, he instructed him immediately after crossing the frontier to reopen the mosques, and to declare that he had no hostility towards peaceful citizens, but only against Guchluk, their oppressor. A nomad and a supporter of Shamanism, one who appealed without distinction to all good and all evil spirits, one to whom all religions were of equal value, and one in whose following priests

of every conceivable creed (Shamans, Lamas, Buddhists, Manicheans, and Nestorians) said their prayers side by side, suddenly became protector of the towns and of Islam. It was plain that Jenghiz was well aware of the importance and power of religious fanaticism, and wished to turn it to account in order to save his warriors.

Jebei's command that the mosques should be reopened kindled enthusiasm with lightning rapidity. As soon as the Mongolian riders appeared outside a town, a rising occurred among the Moslems, and the garrison, if they did not flee, were ruthlessly cut down. All the gates opened before Jebei, all the Moham-medans hailed him as their liberator, and, since he kept his word, and his well-disciplined troops refrained everywhere from plundering and burning, the whole eastern part of the realm, including such important towns as Khami, Khotan, and Kashgar, were speedily in his hands.

The sudden appearance of the Mongols, the rapidity of their advance, and the loss of the strongest bulwarks of his realm, took Guchluk completely by surprise. He made one more endeavour to secure a favourable decision in the open field, but the army was already discouraged, there was no heart in the fighting of the Moslem sections, so that he was defeated, and fled into the Pamirs.

Hither and thither on the Roof of the World, Jebei's riders hunted him, until the remnants of his army abandoned him, and with a few that remained faithful he sought refuge in the savage gorges on the frontiers of Badakshan. The defeated Emperor was no longer worth the sweat of Mongolian warriors. While they amused themselves with the capture of the famous white-muzzled horses which for ages the Chinese had been wont to import for stud purposes from the Fergana Valley, a few native hunters, commissioned for the purpose by Jebei, followed Guchluk into the utmost recesses of the hills, captured him, and handed him over for the stipulated reward.

Together with the head of his enemy, Jebei Noyon sent the Khakan a thousand of the "heavenly" white-muzzled horses as a gift.

"Guard against arrogance. Remember that arrogance brought them all to their end, the Wang-Khan, Baibuka Tayan, and the Kin Emperor." Such was Jenghiz' warning to his Orlok; but he felt satisfied with the outcome of the enterprise.

He was now at the climax of his power. From the mountains which thrust upward into the skies, to the ocean which marked the end of the world, his word was law. In the east, the faithful Mukuli was busily at work effecting the final subjugation of the Kin Emperor; in the west, Jebei was riding through the valleys and over the passes of the Pamirs, to see if he could still find any tribes which were not ready to submit to his master.

Juji, likewise, had performed his task, finishing the work which young Temuchin, five-and-thirty years before when with foreign aid he recaptured Bortei, had not ventured to undertake lest he should disturb the balance among the tribes of Mongolia. He had now taken a belated but all the more thorough vengeance upon the Merkits, ravaging their forests, and eradicating one clan after another.

There was only one man, a son of Toto, whom Juji wished to spare. The Merkit prince was so magnificent an archer, that the Mongols, themselves the best archers in the world, could not but admire his prowess, and Juji begged grace for the prisoner, as a personal favour.

But Jenghiz Khan had learned that clemency to foes led to fresh wars, and he refused to pardon.

"The Merkits," he said, "are the most reprehensible of tribes. Toto's son is an ant, who in time will grow into a serpent and become an enemy of the realm. I have laid low so many kings and armies on your behalf. Why bother about this one man?"

Juji was vexed that his father rejected the petition, but he did not venture to expose himself to Jenghiz Khan's wrath. The Merkit prince was put to death, and Juji marched on to the land of the Kipchaks that he might work off his spleen on the steppe peoples of the Kirghiz and the Tumats, who had long since forgotten that they had ever been vassals, but were now accounted part of Juji's dominion.

III

The fall of Kara-Khitai, and the appearance of a Mongolian army westward of the Irtysh, aroused much attention in Western Asia.

Hitherto, in this part of the world, all that had been known of Jenghiz Khan was what the Moslem merchants had to relate. Just as to the Chinese world three decades earlier he had appeared to be nothing more than a youthful barbarian chieftain who deserved his Chinese official title, so by the world of Islam he was accounted nothing but a nomad sovereign with a taste for order in his dominion, one who refrained from plundering merchants, and with whom good business could be done.

Then the merchants brought tidings that the Khakan had conquered the distant realm of the Kin, of which, here in Western Asia, people had no more than cloudy ideas, and the devotees of Islam began to take notice. They themselves were now under the sign of a great conqueror, Ala-ed-din Mohammed, Shah of Khwarizmia.

The comparatively small State of Khwarizm or "Khwarizm Proper" between the Amu-Darya and the Syr-Darya, immediately to the south of the Sea of Aral, must be distinguished from the much larger Khwarizmia or Khwarizmian Empire into which it was expanded by the conquests of Mohammed.

The offspring of a Turkish slave, whom the Sultan of the Seljuks had appointed viceroy of the province of Khwarizm on the Lower Amu-Darya, Mohammed had inherited from his father a Khwarizmian realm which extended from the Caspian to the neighbourhood of Bokhara and from the Sea of Aral to the Persian plateau. During incessant wars he enlarged his dominions in every direction, across the Syr-Darya to the northward, and forced his way into the Kirghiz steppes. In the east he conquered Transoxania with Samarkand and Fergana, subjugated in the south the mountain tribes of Afghanistan, and extended his power westward across Irak Adjemi. As the "Shadow of Allah upon Earth", as a "Second Alexander", as "The Great",

and "The Victorious", he was already dreaming of a unification of the whole world of Islam under his sceptre, and had demanded from the Caliph of Bagdad (the same Caliph about whom the crusading preacher Jacques de Vitry had written letters to European potentates), his recognition as Sultan and overlord.

The Caliph of Bagdad, whose secular authority had become insignificant, so that he now ruled over no more than Mesopotamia, still possessed, in accordance with the doctrine of the Prophet, overwhelming importance as Commander of the Faithful and spiritual head of the Mohammedan world. The policy of the Caliph towards the new dynasties that were perpetually arising, each of them aiming at universal dominion, resembled that of the Popes towards the German Emperors as soon as these grew overweening. Caliph Nasir refused to recognise Shah Mohammed as Sultan, would not put Mohammed's name in the public prayers, and tried to effect an alliance against the ruler of Khwarizm among the still independent princes. But the letters proposing this fell into the Shah's hands while he was engaged in the conquest of Afghanistan, and as soon as he had proof of the Caliph's intrigues, he summoned a Moslem council, denying Nasir's right to the throne of the Caliphate, and proposing to set up an anti-Caliph.

Now, without infringing the sanctity of the Caliphate, Mohammed could prepare for a campaign against Nasir with the object of deposing him.

At the time these preparations were in the making, the Shah received tidings of the appearance of a new ruler in the East beyond Kara-Khitai. He knew nothing about the Mongolian world, having heard merely of great conquests, of a campaign in the distant Kin Empire, of the raid of Mongolian riders into the Kirghiz steppes; but he thought it would be more cautious to postpone his campaign against Bagdad. He began to build fortresses in the east and north of his dominion, and sent an embassy to Mongolia.

Jenghiz Khan knew much more about the Moslem world than the Shah knew about the Mongolians. From Mohammedans

came thousands of things which the nomads found extremely useful: chain armour, which no arrow could pierce; steel helmets and shields; carefully forged scimitars; also exquisite articles for female adornment, glass utensils, many-coloured carpets which were as soft as down; wonderful silks. Through the envoys, he conveyed an offer to Mohammed, their lord and master. It ran as follows:

"I am already acquainted with the size and the power of your Shah's realm. He is the ruler of the West, just as I am the ruler of the East, and we should do well to live together on friendly terms. Our boundaries come into contact in Kipchak, and it would be advantageous if the merchants could move freely from one country into the other."

He also sent a return embassy bearing rich gifts: ingots of silver, jade, camel's hair textiles, furs. To flatter the Shah, all Jenghiz' envoys were Mohammedans (Uighurs, traders from Eastern Turkestan); none of them were Mongols. They were led by a merchant named Mahmud Yelvadsh.

He was given so distinguished a reception that the court of the usually arrogant Shah was speechless. Then their ruler began to ask questions.

Mohammed wanted to know whether the Khakan ruled many peoples; whether he had really conquered the distant Kin Empire; and, finally, under the rose, and in veiled terms, he inquired whether the Mongol Khan could be a danger to himself. He warned the leader of the envoys:

"You are a Moslem, and you were born in Khwarizm, so you must tell me the truth without concealment. You know the size and power of my realm. Is the Khan's army as strong as mine or not?"

Was there not a threat underlying this question? The Shah had learned that Mahmud Yelvadsh was a Khwarizmian by birth. He therefore regarded the merchant as one of his own subjects, and the answer would have to be couched in such terms as not to vex the questioner. Nevertheless, as a good Moslem, Mahmud must tell the truth. He thought of the wonderful,

richly adorned horsemen of the Moslem ruler, and of the Khakan's men whose equipment was by no means so splendid, being carefully adapted for war purposes; and his reply was a diplomatic masterstroke:

"The sheen of the army of Jenghiz Khan, compared with the radiance of the warriors of the Sultan of the World, is like the light of a lamp as compared with that of the luminous orb which sheds its glory all over the world; like the countenance of a monstrosity as compared with the charms of a Rumelian Turk. Also the number of your warriors greatly exceeds the number of those of the Khan of Khans."

This information was pleasing to Mohammed. A commercial treaty was drafted to the mutual satisfaction of the rulers of the East and of the West, and while on one side and on the other the first caravans were being made ready, the Shah set out westward towards the Caliphate—at about the time when Jebei Noyon was taking the field against Kara-Khitai.

IV

Simultaneously with the news that Shah Mohammed was preparing for a campaign against Bagdad, rumours reached the Caliph's court to the effect that, in the east, on the other side of the mountains of Afghanistan, a mighty realm had been established. At once the Caliph made inquiries about this realm, and learned (above all from Nestorian Christians whose communities were dispersed far and wide throughout Asia), that the ruler of the East was an enemy of the Shah and a Christian.

This information was a strange mingling of fact and fiction. Underlying it was the legend of Prester John, the Christian King of India—a legend which had been rife in the Orient for nearly a century.

The story originated at the time of great struggles in China. The Liao Dynasty had just collapsed in face of Kin attacks, and to avoid absolute annihilation, one of the most energetic Khitan

princes of the Liao Dynasty, Yeliu-Tashe by name, had turned westward with his armed forces, crossing the Gobi Desert from east to west to found the realm of Kara-Khitai in Turkestan. When this new "mighty realm in the east" soon defeated the Seljuks (whose power extended from Egypt to the Pamirs) in a sanguinary conflict, the news of the victory swept across vast spaces to reach the ears of the Crusaders, who were then besieging Damascus. It went without saying that this enemy of Islam who had so unexpectedly cropped up in the east must be a Christian; and seeing that, since the days of Alexander's campaigns, Europe had known that somewhere in the east was the wonderland of India, fancy speedily constructed out of the Khitan prince Yeliu-Tashe a Christian "King of India", who was given the name of Prester John. When, now, the bravest representatives of Christian knighthood were defeated by the Seljuks, although this army from the east had been victorious over them, Prester John was equipped with incalculable powers, and described as a King of Kings. That was how the legend reached Europe, where it had a long life.

The Seljuk realm crumbled to pieces. In its eastern portion the powerful Khwarizmian Empire of Shah Mohammed was established; meanwhile the struggle against Kara-Khitai continued. When Guchluk, who in youth had been a Nestorian Christian, began to persecute the Moslems, the Nestorians no longer entertained a doubt. The mighty new realm in the east must be a Christian realm, and its ruler, a descendant of Prester John, must be an enemy of the Shah.

The Caliph, who, in his utmost need, was ready to ally himself with Death or the Devil, went to the Nestorian Patriarch of Bagdad to ask his intermediation. Centuries of close community in the big city of Bagdad had rubbed the angles off both Christians and Moslems; the two spiritual chieftains understood one another very well; and, in return for a promise from the Caliph to remove a mosque built too near the Christian quarters, the Patriarch was willing, in conjunction with the Caliph (to whose secular power the Nestorians were subject), to send a dispatch to this

King of the East. The proposal to be made to Jenghiz was that, as soon as the Shah of Khwarizmia invaded the West, Jenghiz should lay waste Mohammed's territories from the East. Glorious victories and abundant loot awaited the eastern conqueror.

Then a difficulty occurred to the Caliph and the Patriarch. How were they to send this message to the Sovereign of the East? The only way lay across the territories of the Shah of Khwarizmia. It would never do to let the messenger carry a writing, which might fall into the Shah's hands; and yet he must have credentials of some sort.

Then someone had a brain-wave. The intended messenger's head was shaved; with a pointed instrument, red-hot, his credentials were branded into his scalp; a blue pigment was rubbed into the burns. He was made to learn his message by heart, and, as soon as his hair had grown long enough, he was dispatched on his long journey to the East.

By the time he had crossed Bokhara and got as far as Samarkand, the world had assumed a different aspect. Shah Mohammed, at the head of his army, was already marching westward, while Jeksi was hunting Guchluk, the defeated Emperor of Kara-Khitai, through the gorges of the Pamirs. In Samarkand, too, the envoy heard tell of the Mongolian Khakan, who styled himself "Lord of the East", and of the caravans which were wont to enter his realm by way of Kipchak.

After a while "arrow"-messengers came from Juji's domains to Jenghiz to relate that in the Kirghiz steppe a ragged fellow had appeared declaring that the Caliph of Bagdad had sent him as envoy to the Lord of the Mongols.

Jenghiz had learned from the Mohammedan merchants that Bagdad was a city of wonders, somewhere in the west, on the edge of the world—so far away that no one hitherto had ever gone thither from Mongolia. There the Caliph held sway, a descendant of the Prophet, the religious head of all the Moslems.

With the utmost possible speed, the messengers returned to Juji with instructions that the man was instantly to be sent to the horde beside the Onon.

Thanks to this envoy from the Mohammedan and the Nestorian religious chiefs, the Mongols' field of vision was for the first time extended beyond the regions of Eastern and Central Asia. Jenghiz now learned that Shah Mohammed was not really the "Lord of the West"; that on the farther side of his realm there lay other countries whose sovereigns were at enmity with Mohammed; and that even these distant lands were not the end of the world, for beyond them was the realm of the Christians, who were again sending armies into the land of the Caliph.

He knew the East well enough. There he had come to the end of the world. But westward its extent seemed endless; and everywhere in those distant regions there prevailed conditions similar to those which he had known during his youth in Mongolia. Everywhere the kings were at war with one another, and there was no supreme ruler.

Jenghiz felt little inclined to intervene in the quarrel between Caliph and Shah. He noted, indeed, that Mohammed was an unrighteous and intolerant ruler; that he made war upon Moslem sovereigns; that with fire and sword he ravaged their lands, Moslem and Christian alike; and that there were many malcontents among his subjects. But the trade between Mongolia and Khwarizm was a useful asset. The caravans moved regularly to and fro; and he had no special sympathy with the Caliph. This was a strange sort of embassy in which two high priests invited him to make war against a monarch. Priests should pray to God and not levy war against sovereign princes. If Heaven had not been on the side of the Shah, his adversaries would not have been delivered into his hands.

The envoy received the answer which, at an earlier date, Jenghiz had given to the ambassador from the Sung Empire begging for the continuance of the war against the Kin Emperor: "I am not at war with him."

The embassy from Bagdad proved fruitless.

But later, when all the lands of Western Asia were laid waste by Jenghiz and when the Islamic peoples were under the heel of the Mongols and thought that their final ruin was at hand, the

Arab chroniclers wrote: "If it be true, as the Persians relate, that Caliph Nasir summoned the Tartars into our country, this was a deed than which no crime could be more heinous."

All the same, it was exclusively owing to this embassy that for several decades more the Caliphate was able to preserve its independence. What the envoy told them about the power and greatness of the Caliph produced so strong an impression upon the Mongols that the generals of Jenghiz turned northward after the conquest of Western Asia, and made the Khakan acquainted with the Russian steppes. Not until Russia, Poland, and Hungary collapsed, after the conquest of every realm in Western Asia, did Jenghiz' grandson Hulagu the son of Tuli decide, in the year 1258, to march upon Bagdad.

V

To begin with, Mohammed's campaign against the Caliph was successful. His army overran the semi-independent principalities which lay on his route, and he made his way into Western Persia. Only one mountain range separated him from the lowlands of Mesopotamia when, at the opening of the year 1218, the winter proved excessively severe. Ice and snow blocked the mountain passes; the Shah's men were not inured to hardship; horses starved and men froze—so, half-way between Hamadan and Bagdad, Mohammed faced about for the homeward march.

He intended this to be merely a postponement. Ruler of an enormous realm, in command of an invincible army, he hoped to return a year later even better equipped. But he was met by the unwelcome tidings that Guchluk, the Emperor of Kara-Khitai, had just been slain by Jebei. Now the territories of the Khakan marched with his everywhere to the east and the north. Mohammed had the whole army recalled to the Amu-Darya and the Syr-Darya. It was better to have his fighting forces close at hand instead of more than a thousand miles away.

"But when a mortal's star enters the constellation of mis-

fortune," writes a Persian chronicler with regard to this decision, "fate decrees that all his undertakings shall have an effect opposite to that which he desires, and nothing can save him—not the most penetrating intelligence, nor the most extraordinary qualities, nor the most extensive experience. His merits are annihilated by the rigour of destiny. Although the angel of success had hitherto marched before Mohammed, and although fortunate constellations had made it easy for him to fulfil all his wishes, now he was overwhelmed with the greatest misfortunes that can befall a prince, and the campaign against Bagdad seems to have been no more than a prelude to these."

Hardly had Mohammed reached Samarkand than a message arrived from the important frontier fortress of Otrar to the effect that the governor had captured a caravan, and that there were Mongolian spies among the Mohammedan merchants.

Shah Mohammed sent orders: "Put them to death."

"With this command, the Shah signed his own death-warrant," writes the chronicler. "Each drop of the blood he then shed was paid for by floods of his subjects' life-blood. Each hair of the victims' heads was paid for by a thousand heads, and each dinar was heavily outweighed by tons of gold."

The governor did not miss the chance of seizing the rich freight of the caravan, and he ordered a massacre of the hundred and fifty men who were with it, merchants, servants, camel-drivers, all, all. Only one of the slaves made his escape. Fleeing to the nearest Mongolian post, he reported, and was immediately sent to Jenghiz.

The Khakan found it hard to believe that a sovereign should thus have broken his pledged word to allow caravans to pass untrammelled through his territories. It must have been done by the governor on his own initiative, and Mohammed could have known nothing about the matter.

Jenghiz sent an embassy to Samarkand demanding from the Shah the surrender of the guilty governor.

Mohammed Ala-ed-din (the Shadow of Allah) could not believe his ears. An infidel dog, a Khan of the nomads, calling

him to account, him the Commander of Islam, the "Second Alexander". Did this wretch dare to sit in judgment on one of Mohammed's governors? Was he threatening war? There could be only one answer to such an insult. He had the leader of the embassy put to death. The other envoys had their beards singed off and in this condition were sent back to the Khakan.

The Mongols regarded an ambassador as sacred and inviolable. When Jenghiz was informed about the execution, and when he saw the way in which the other envoys had been insulted, we are told that he shed tears, saying: "God knows that I am not responsible for this misfortune."

Then he shouted: "May Heaven show me the grace of finding energy for revenge."

His arrow-messengers were dispatched in all directions to summon half a continent, reaching from the Altai Mountains to the Yellow Sea, for a campaign of vengeance. Every Mongol from the age of seventeen to the age of sixty took up arms: the savage riders of Kipchak, the Prince of the Uighurs with his warriors, a corps of Chinese artillery, regiments from Khitan and Kara-Khitai, answered the call and hastened to the colours. Only one of Jenghiz' vassals, the King of Hsi-Hsia, refused, saying:

"Is the Khakan not yet weary of subjugating the nations? If his own army is not strong enough for what he wants to do, let him desist."

A refusal at such an hour, the repudiation of a vassal's supreme duty, enraged Jenghiz, and he said:

"What is to prevent my marching with all my army against the Tangut realm and razing everything there to the ground? What can prevent my destroying all that is there, and exterminating this people?"

But the blood of the murdered ambassador was still crying from the ground. That vengeance must take precedence.

"I have given my word." Then, prophetically, he added: "Though it be my last hour, I will call him to account for such treason."

CHAPTER IX

WAR AGAINST THE SHAH

I

IN the Kin Empire Mukuli was at work upon his war of attrition; a considerable force was left in Mongolia to hold Hsi-Hsia in check. But the troops with which Jenghiz Khan marched westward numbered close upon a quarter of a million men.

Even more remarkable than the number were the organisation and the equipment of this army, unrivalled in the world of that date. The experiences of the Mongols during their five years' struggle against China were systematically turned to account. The skill of the foreign physicians, handicraftsmen, and technicians was to be utilised in order to minister to fighting strength. Every possibility had been considered, and every misadventure had been guarded against.

The soldier must have in his kit, not only what he required for actual fighting, but also needles and thread, and a file for the sharpening of arrow-heads. There must be a shirt of strong, raw silk for the man to put on before going into battle, for such silk is not penetrated by an arrow, but driven into the wound, and the Chinese surgeons were able to extract arrow-heads, even when broken off, by pulling the silken fabric out of the wound.

Although the army consisted mainly of cavalry, it was accompanied by a heavy artillery train. Upon yaks and camels were laden (carefully taken apart for transport), not only mangonels and catapults, but also—though this was many years before, in Europe, Berthold Schwarz "discovered" gunpowder—flame-throwers and cannons, to ignite wooden towers and overwhelm the defenders of fortresses with a hail of stones and

iron. Chinese experts in earthworks and bridge-building accompanied the army; on the way to the Syr-Darya Prince Ogatai had to build no less than thirty-eight bridges. There were also hydraulic engineers to divert the course of rivers and cause floods that might help in siege operations.

There were special officers to see to the equipment of each troop; and should everything not be in perfect order, the responsible officer would be punished as well as the private who was at fault. Quartermasters with the advance-guard had to choose camps for every division. It was the business of others to make sure that when a camp was quitted nothing of importance was left behind. There were yet others to preside over the just distribution of the loot.

Each rider had three spare horses. His weapons were designed both for close combat and for fighting from a distance. He carried a bow, two quivers with various kinds of arrows, one of the quivers being ready for instant use, and the reserve-quiver sealed against damp. Then each man had a javelin, or a lance with a hook in order to pull the adversary out of the saddle; a scimitar or a battle-axe; and, not least, a lasso, the Mongols being past-masters in the use of this weapon. As recently as the Napoleonic wars, a regiment of Kalmucks (descendants of the Mongols) aroused a panic in the ranks of their enemies by using lassos in the heat of a cavalry attack, unhorsing the Frenchmen and galloping off with the helpless opponent trailing behind. The French, among whom a rumour was rife that there were cannibals in the Russian army, believed that their comrades were destined for the cooking-pot.

II

We have reached the autumn of 1218. Jenghiz Khan proposed that the huge army should assemble next spring in the land of the Uighurs on the upper waters of the Irtysh, intending to await the melting of the snows before leading his troops through

the main pass of Zungaria—that gate of entry by which the nomad tribes of the Central Asiatic plateau have, for ages, been accustomed to pour themselves into the West. He knew that before he could reach the Syr-Darya he would have to cross a waste that was almost waterless and foodless; that he would have to transport an army of a quarter of a million men and more than a million horses over a desert in which they must nourish themselves as best they could—for there was no other route. In his campaign against the Kin Empire he had used for his invasion any point along a frontier extending to three hundred miles; but the whole of the eastern border of the Shah's realm was protected by impassable mountains ranging to over 20,000 feet. Even when Jenghiz, by a detour through the northern steppes, should at length reach the Syr-Darya, he would have several hundred miles more to traverse through hostile country before he could try to cut one of the vital nerves of the empire in the oasis of Zarafshan, where the capital Samarkand and the rich province of Bokhara lay.

While the General Staff was still deciding upon the routes for the various armies, there arrived from Kara-Khitai a report by Jebei Noyon. He had found a path leading westward through the mountains. It could not possibly go anywhere else but into Khwarizmia. This meant that it would be practicable to invade that country, not only from the north by way of the Syr-Darya, but also from the east, so Jenghiz Khan immediately sent Juji with reinforcements for Jebei at Kashgar. They were to reconnoitre the new route.

The Prince and the Orlok were soon agreed upon their plan, so now, in mid-winter, began an audacious ride into the unknown beside which Napoleon's and Hannibal's crossings of the Alps pale. The army of from 25,000 to 30,000 men entered the cleft between the Pamirs proper and the Thian-Shan Mountains, riding through snow five or six feet deep, at a temperature which threatened to freeze the horses' legs, to reach the ice-bound passes of Kisil-Art and Terek-Davan at a height of over 13,000 feet. Amid raging snow-storms they struggled along in

a frozen world between mountain giants considerably over 20,000 feet high, the legs of their horses being wrapped in yak-hides, while the men were muffled up in "dachas"—double sheepskin coats. To warm themselves, they opened the veins of their horses, drank the hot blood, and then closed the wounds. All superfluous baggage, everything with which they could dispense, was thrown away to make the advance possible for men and beasts, and yet the route was littered with the skeletons of horses. Only the skeletons, for the riders devoured the flesh to the last morsel while it was still warm. And at every mile of the advance there were left frozen corpses of men who had died from cold and exhaustion.

Then, after unspeakable hardships and privations, there opened before the troops the lovely green valley of Fergana, on the upper reaches of the Syr-Darya—the land of vineyards and silk-culture, of wheat and stud-farms, no less celebrated for its goldsmiths' art than for its glass-blowers. Here the spring was already in full bloom.

But as soon as they had descended into this oasis, as soon as their advance-guard appeared in the villages and began to drive off cattle and to requisition fodder, Mohammed arrived with his fresh and vigorous army to form front against the Mongols, weakened by hardship and privation.

When he caught sight of the skin-clad nomads on their little rough-haired ponies, men without either cuirasses or iron shields, the ruler of Khwarizmia was almost inclined to regard them with compassion. Nor did they seem to be in any mood for fighting. At the first assault they fled, not forgetting, however, during their retreat to discharge some well-aimed arrows.

Mohammed's army advanced farther up the valley, and soon encountered Juji's main body. Not only was this force greatly outnumbered, but its opponents were better armed, better equipped, fresh, and eager for the fray.

Jebei was by no means inclined to join battle. If the Mongol invaders were to withdraw again into the mountains, the Shah would follow them with his best troops, being thus lured farther

away from the point where Jenghiz and the big army hoped to deliver the chief blow.

But Juji insisted upon fighting, for he said: "How could I explain matters to my father if I were to run away?"

The Shah's troops attacked to the sound of loud trumpet-blasts and the ear-racking clash of cymbals. The Mongols, with savage cries, flung themselves upon the foe, their manœuvres being extraordinarily quick, and incomprehensible to their adversaries. The divisions were wholly dependent for their guidance upon little banners and field-insignia of various colours and shapes. They attacked, wheeled, scattered, and re-collected, changing the type of onslaught again and again before Mohammed's men could grasp their intention. So fierce was their pressure upon the enemy centre that the Shah was himself in danger of capture, from which he was only saved by a fierce counter-attack made by his son Jelal ed-Din. Juji, too, escaped capture by the self-sacrificing courage of one of his army-chiefs. The fiercely fought contest lasted till nightfall, and then the two armies retired to their previous positions.

The camp-fires flamed.

At grey of dawn, the Shah's troops found that there was nothing in front of them but an empty field, strewn with corpses. The Mongol army had disappeared. During the night, the men had mounted their spare horses, and by this time must be a day's march away, with all their baggage, their wounded, and the cattle they had driven off before Mohammed appeared.

Shah Mohammed could claim the victory, but he was not disposed to follow the Mongols into the mountains. Having distributed honours and rewards, he returned to Samarkand to celebrate his triumph.

No longer, however, did he regard these enemies with contempt. Never had he seen men fight so boldly and skilfully. Realising the need for caution, he assembled all available troops, and, being extremely anxious to learn Jenghiz Khan's further plans, sent spies into Mongolia.

III

At the time when Juji left Kashgar he had been 2,000 miles from Jenghiz Khan's horde. Now he was separated by only about 1,200 miles from the rallying-point beside the Irtysh, but the intervening space consisted of wild mountains, sandy and rock-strewn deserts. As a last hindrance, he had crossed the Kisil-Art and the Terek-Davan passes; but not for a moment had he been out of touch with his father. The arrow-messengers made light of the terrors of nature and thought nothing of obstacles. They could ride anywhere.

The Khakan was informed about the battle in the Fergana Valley and its upshot, and he commanded his son to advance. He sent a reinforcement of 5,000 men to Jebei with instructions to make for the upper waters of the Amu-Darya (not far as the crow flies), and then ride down the river.

Though "not far as the crow flies", this meant to get from one high-mountain valley into another, crossing several ranges over 20,000 feet high to enter the watershed of the Amu-Darya, the Oxus of the ancients. Forthwith Jebei proceeded to obey instructions.

Jenghiz Khan's main force, far to the north, had meanwhile, in a few great detachments, begun to march through Semirychensk—the desolate Land of the Seven Rivers. One of the armies was led by Jagatai, another by Ogatai. The youngest son, Tuli, remained with Jenghiz. The General Staff, too, accompanied his army.

Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai was likewise on hand. The accuracy of his predictions had won the ruler's confidence in the sage from China. Once soothsayers had come from the west and had prophesied that on a certain night the moon would be darkened, but Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai shook his head, and mentioned a very different date. At the time specified by the astrologers, the moon shone as clear as ever, while in the hour foretold by Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai eight-tenths of the orb was darkened. Since then Jenghiz had more faith in him than in any soothsayer or shaman, and his

counsels proved so shrewd and practical that there were very few matters upon which the Khakan did not ask his advice.

The promotion of the Chinese pundit to first minister aroused jealousy among the Mongolian nobles, and when it transpired that the sage was to accompany their ruler into the war, one of them, held in special repute because of his skill as a maker of bows, angrily cried:

"What should a bookworm do in a campaign of warriors?"

"Well, let us have your opinion about that," said Jenghiz to Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai.

"One who wishes to make bows, needs a handicraftsman who understands this art," replied Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai with his quiet smile. "But one who sets out to conquer realms cannot dispense with the handicraftsman who understands the art of government."

This decided matters, and Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai accompanied the army.

Kulan, too, Jenghiz Khan's favourite wife, was to see the western world, whereas Bortei, as mistress of the horde, was left in Mongolia.

Midsummer had arrived before the whole army with all its baggage was in motion. They were crossing the first minor mountain chain when the sky darkened, snow began to fall, and, of a sudden, though it was the hot season, the ground was covered with a white pall.

Immediately Jenghiz Khan called a halt. He wanted to know what so remarkable a phenomenon could signify. If Heaven did not favour the campaign, he was prepared to abandon it. Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai was asked to interpret the sign.

The Chinese astronomer explained that the King of Winter with his powers had broken into the domain of the King of Summer. This signified that the Ruler of the North would gain the victory over the Ruler of the South. Heaven announced the coming triumph of Jenghiz Khan over the Shah.

The interpretation was favourable, and the meaning of the signs certainly seemed clear; but when one has to do with ascertaining the will of the gods one cannot be too cautious, so

Jenghiz Khan tried an additional source of conviction. In accordance with ancient Mongolian custom, he burned the shoulder-blade of a wether. While the fire was encircling the bone and cracking it, he examined the resulting fissures. The life-line was good, and there were many transverse cracks which indicated the death of princes, nobles, fellow-tribesmen. But strongest of all were the lines of good fortune.

Jenghiz Khan made up his mind. The army resumed its march.

IV

Mohammed had got together 400,000 men, but he did not venture to ride against the Mongols and decide the fate of his realm in an open battle. The news his spies brought to him about Jenghiz Khan was sufficiently alarming:

"His army is as numerous as ants and locusts. His warriors are as brave as lions, so that none of the fatigues or hardships of war can injure them. They know neither ease nor rest, neither flight nor withdrawal. Whithersoever they go, they carry everything they need with them. They satisfy their hunger with dried meat and sour milk, disregarding the instructions as to what is allowed or what is forbidden, but eating the flesh of no matter what animal, even dogs and swine. They open a vein in their horses, and drink the blood. These horses need neither straw nor wheat, being content to scrape through the snow with their hoofs and eat the underlying grass, or pawing the earth and munching roots and vegetables. When the Mongols effect a conquest, they leave nothing alive, either large or small, and they even rip up the bellies of the women with child. No mountain or river can arrest their progress. They cross every ravine and swim their horses over the rivers, themselves holding on to the mane or the tail."

Still, from the Irtysh to the Syr-Darya the distance measured nearly a thousand miles. The army was obliged to make its way over the mountains, through thick forests, and across rivers. Then came the notorious "hunger-steppe", a waterless waste, through

which the Mongols would have to pass, both men and beasts. Mohammed decided that he would quietly await their coming. If, exhausted by the hardships of the route, they ever reached the Syr-Darya, they would find a series of carefully built and well-provisioned fortresses whose garrisons he hastened to reinforce. Even if Jenghiz should succeed in breaking through the line of fortresses at some point, Mohammed had ample reserves in the neighbourhood of Samarkand ready to hasten to this point and hurl the enemy back upon the Syr-Darya.

Juji descended the fertile valley of the Fergana where he took one town after another, and then began the siege of the key-fortress of Khojend. Jagatai and Ogatai appeared beside the Syr-Darya, laid siege to Otrar, and took a number of lesser strongholds. But the two great fortresses were able to hold out against the Mongols for months. Mohammed did not stir. He was waiting to see where Jenghiz would attack in person.

Then came messengers hasting from the south. At the crossing of the Amu-Darya, about two hundred and fifty miles away, Mongols had invaded the land and were plundering it and laying it waste.

This was Jebei with his little troop, which had actually crossed the Pamirs; but the Shah had no information as to its strength. He heard only of burning villages and towns. If the enemy should advance down the Amu-Darya, he would be cut off from the southern part of his realm, from Afghanistan and Khorassan, the two great reservoirs of the east, where his sons were levying new armies. Mohammed sent a large part of his reserves against Jebei and the raiders.

Hardly had they left, when terrible tidings came. Jenghiz Khan, who must be somewhere to the eastward, or so it had been supposed, was now advancing from the opposite direction, from the west, against Bokhara and Samarkand. It seemed incredible. How could the enemy be in the west? By what possible means had he managed to outflank the Shah? Nevertheless refugees from the burning villages and towns confirmed the news, fabulous though it seemed.

Jenghiz, at the head of 50,000 men, had made a detour to the north, had crossed the Syr-Darya by a ford, and then with his whole army had traversed the sandy desert of Kizil-Kum, 400 miles wide, regarded as impassable. (This was the place in which, six and a half centuries later, the Russian cavalry lost all its horses in the campaign against Khiva.) Then, appearing suddenly on the lower waters of the Amu-Darya, in Mohammed's rear, Jenghiz threatened that potentate with destruction.

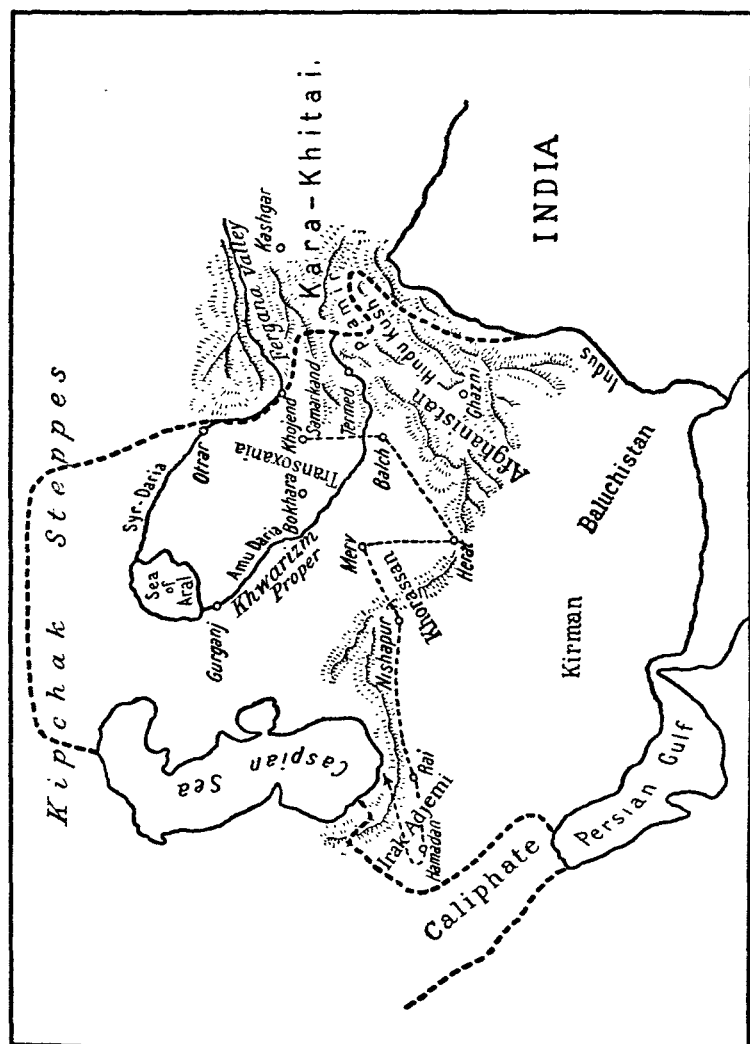
In the west Jenghiz Khan, in the north Jagatai and Ogatai, in the east Juji, and in the south Jebei—the Shah was in a trap, which threatened to close on him from moment to moment. He flung the rest of his army into Samarkand and Bokhara, and, since the road to the north-west, where his tribal home, Khwarizm proper, lay beside the Aral Sea, was blocked by the Mongols, he fled southward, before Jebei cut off his last possibility of retreat.

V

Bokhara was one of the foci of Mohammedan culture, a town of academies, of men learned in the sacred writings; it was a town of villas and gardens.

It had high walls and deep moats, but it was not prepared for a long defence, since no one had expected the enemy here. It was not properly provisioned or munitioned for a siege. The civilian inhabitants were mostly Persians, the garrison mainly Turkish. The Turkish generals thought it preferable to fight their way through to the Amu-Darya, where new armies would be got together. Under cover of night, at the head of their best troops, they made their way out of one of the gates which the Mongols were not watching.

This leaving of a gate unwatched is a favourite ruse of the Mongols. They make no attack on the enemy when he is leaving a town, but a Mongol troop dogs his heels, gives battle next day in the open field and cuts the force down to the last man.



-----Sabutai's pursuit of Shah Muhammed.

THE KHWARIZMIAN EMPIRE

The elders of the city, the cadis and the imams, surrendered without striking a blow.

In astonishment the Mongol warriors spurred through the streets. Jenghiz, accompanied by Tuli, halted in front of the largest building.

"Is that the palace of the Shah?"

He was told that it was the principal mosque, the house of Allah. Riding up the steps, he dismounted, went in, and climbed into the pulpit. To the moolahs, imams, cadis, and elders of the city, who had thronged in after him, he said:

"In the countryside there is neither fodder nor meat. My horses are hungry, my soldiers want food. Open your storehouses."

When the custodians hastened to bring the keys, it was too late, for the Mongols had already broken down the doors. They feasted and held high revel. Musicians and singers were summoned, while the nobles of the city, the cadis and other high dignitaries, were made to groom the horses and provide fodder. The most precious containers of the Koran were used as mangers, while the sacred books were flung anywhere on the ground and trodden under foot.

The devout Moslems simply could not understand that such horrors were possible. One of them turned to the Chief Imam, who was holding the bridle of a Mongolian horse, and said:

"Mevlana, what is the meaning of this? Why do you not raise your voice in prayer to Allah, the All-Powerful, that, with his lightnings, he may destroy these sacrilegious men?"

But the wise imam answered, with pious tears in his eyes:

"Be silent and fulfil the service to which you have been appointed, if you value your life. Should I pray to Allah, things may perhaps go yet worse with us. The wrath of God has overtaken us."

"The wrath of God." That was precisely the idea which Jenghiz Khan wished to arouse in the Moslems.

He rested only for a brief space. Then he rode to the great praying-square in front of the town, whither the inhabitants of

Bokhara had been driven, and spoke to them. Word by word, his speech was interpreted:

"I am the scourge of God. Heaven has delivered you into my hands that I may punish you for your sins, for you have sinned greatly. The nobles among you have led the way in sinning." He enumerated to them the Shah's acts of hostility and faithlessness, and the misdeeds of his governor, and warned them against giving their ruler any assistance.

Having asked the names of the most distinguished and wealthiest men in the city, he summoned them, and said to them:

"What is still left in your houses you need not bother about, for we shall take care of that. Whatever you have hidden or buried, you must bring to me."

Mongolian soldiers accompanied the 280 men to the hiding-places, and all who faithfully delivered over their goods were set free.

Then the civil population was commanded to drive out that portion of the garrison which had not fled but had taken refuge in the citadel. When the Bokharans did not succeed in this, the Mongols gave them a helping hand by setting fire to the quarters in which the citadel stood. The conflagration spread to the whole city.

The struggle for the citadel lasted for several days, then it was taken by storm, what was left of it was burned, and the garrison was massacred. The populace was compelled to raze the walls and fortifications to the ground and to fill in the dykes.

By now Jenghiz Khan had left Bokhara. Taking with him the greater part of his army, he marched on Samarkand, where he hoped to find the Shah, and where the great blow was to be delivered; but he had left enough troops behind in Bokhara to finish "cleaning up" the town.

When every fortified place had been levelled with the ground, the Mongols once more drove the inhabitants to the praying-square, and, having picked out the most vigorous of the young men, sent them to Samarkand to help in the siege. The remainder

were allowed to return to their homes. By the time the Mongols withdrew, Bokhara had ceased to exist as a military position from which the Shah might have been able to threaten Jenghiz Khan in the rear during his further advance westward.

So rapid had been the surprise attack, so speedy had been the work of destruction, that hardly any of the inhabitants could as yet realise what had taken place. A merchant who fled from the devastated town to Khorassan, when questioned about the doings of the Mongols could only say:

"They came, dug, burned, murdered, robbed, and went away."

VI

Outside Samarkand, which was the centre of the eastern Moslem world, a city with a population of half a million, rich markets, great libraries, beautiful palaces, and which still housed an army of more than 100,000 men, the victorious Mongol armies made a junction. This was the capital of the Shah, and the strongest fortress in the eastern part of the realm. That was why Jenghiz Khan concentrated his forces upon it.

His armies had successfully fulfilled their tasks.

Juji had traversed the whole length of the Fergana Valley, and had taken Khojend, the rich commercial city at the exit from the valley, celebrated for its fortifications and for the warlike courage of its inhabitants—who had made a desperate resistance. Timur Melik, the commandant, one of Mohammed's boldest and most capable officers, was able, when the town had been stormed, to take refuge upon a fortress built on an island in the river, where he entrenched himself. The Mongols compelled the prisoners they took in the city to bring rafts, and, under heavy arrow-fire from the besieged, to build a dam across the channel to the island. When the stone embankment had nearly reached its destination, Timur Melik and his garrison escaped in boats, which, to save them from being set on fire by lighted arrows, he had covered with felt smeared with damp clay. Then he and his men sailed

down the Syr-Darya. The Mongols stretched an iron chain across the river, but the boats burst the chain. Lower down, the Mongols built a pontoon bridge, on which they mounted catapults—but Timur Melik and his men disembarked before the pontoon was reached. The nomads continued the pursuit on horseback, and cut down all the fugitives except Timur Melik himself, who escaped and joined Jelal ed-Din, Mohammed's son.

Jagatai and Ogatai spent five months upon the siege of Otrar. The governor, who had had the Mongol merchants massacred, knew that for him there could be no pardon, and even when the town fell he held out for a month longer in the citadel. When the citadel was stormed, he withdrew with a last remnant into a central tower, and, after arrows had run short, he defended the place with tiles cut from the roof and flung upon the storming party. The Mongols' orders were to take him alive, so in the end they mined the tower and dug him out from amid the ruins. In chains he was brought to Jenghiz outside Samarkand, who had molten silver poured into the eyes and ears of the man he held responsible for the war, and then tortured him to death.

Jebei, finally, defeated the army sent against him by the Shah, and subjugated the various lesser places which lay along his line of march.

The three armies took the young and vigorous men out of the captured cities and turned them to account for the siege of Samarkand, since all the prisoners, and all deserters to the side of the Mongols, were unanimous in declaring that years would be needed before Samarkand could be taken.

For two days Jenghiz rode round the city at a considerable distance from the walls. He contemplated these mighty fortifications, the huge bastions, the deep trenches, the sturdy towers, the iron gates. He could not but be reminded of Peking, the Middle Palace of the realm of Kin, and of the long and futile attempts he made to storm those giant walls. Then one of the prisoners told him that Shah Mohammed was no longer within the city, and immediately he lost interest in Samarkand.

Saying contemptuously to his Orlok: "The walls of a city are

no stronger than the courage of their defenders," he sent his two best army leaders, the cunning Sabutai and the dauntless Jebei Noyon, together with his son-in-law Toguchar, each in command of a tuman (ten thousand men), in pursuit of the Shah.

This seemed a ludicrous and almost insane commission.

So far Jenghiz had merely taken the frontier fortresses of the Syr-Darya and in the Fergana Valley, as well as a few unimportant posts near Bokhara in the domain between the Syr-Darya and the Amu-Darya. The mighty realms of the Shah extended for more than a thousand miles to the south and to the west, were incredibly rich in men and horses, possessed dozens of towns like Bokhara and Samarkand; and here he was sending 30,000 of his warriors that they might hunt the ruler of the Mohammedan world to death in his own kingdom.

But Jenghiz knew very well what he was about. By these same tactics Jebei had subjugated Kara-Khitai almost without striking a blow; and here he used the identical method, with brilliant adaptations to the altered circumstances, against the Khwarizm-Shah as well.

In this vast territory there lived a dozen peoples of different races who had a long or a short while before been made tributary. As long as the Shah, their ruler, was in effective command, they would provide armies, which might have been a danger, not only to the 30,000 men Jenghiz was now sending in pursuit, but to his whole vast army. What did it matter, in these circumstances, if he should take and burn half a dozen such fortresses as Samarkand? The one man whom he was hunting, the Shah, was more important than them all. Mohammed must have no time to appeal to his subjects, no time to levy new armies, no time to organise resistance. He must be reduced to a condition of such terror that he would think of nothing but his own safety. Then a wedge must be driven between him and his subjects, who perhaps only obeyed him under compulsion. They must be made to feel that their fate had become independent of his.

Jenghiz, therefore, issued the following command to the Orlok whom he sent in pursuit of the Shah:

"Do not come back until you have taken him prisoner. If he flees before you, follow him through his domains, whithersoever he may turn. Spare every town which surrenders, but destroy ruthlessly anyone who gets in your way and offers resistance."

To Sabutai he gave a warrant in Uighur writing, sealed with the red seal of the Khakan. This warrant ran as follows:

"Emirs, Khans, and all persons shall know that I have delivered over to you the whole face of the earth from sunrise to sunset. All who surrender will be spared; whoever does not surrender but opposes with struggle and dissension, shall be annihilated."

Everyone who surrendered was to be spared. Everyone who espoused the cause of this doomed sovereign was to perish with him.

Jenghiz saw to it that his Mongols who were in pursuit of the Shah should keep their promise. When Toguchar plundered a town which had surrendered to Jebei, the leader of the first tuman, Jenghiz was of a mind to have his own son-in-law executed; and, when his wrath had somewhat abated, he sent a messenger to Toguchar, a common soldier, with instructions that the commander was to lay down his commission and continue to serve as a private in his own tuman, which was transferred to the command of Sabutai. So rigid was discipline in the Mongolian army that the commanding general who was the Khakan's son-in-law obeyed the order brought to him by a private—to fall, shortly afterwards, fighting bravely, as a private, at the storm of one of the cities.

VII

Shah Mohammed was in Balkh, amid the foothills of Afghanistan, when news reached him that the Orlok with their troops had crossed the Amu-Darya and were advancing with a broad front. He was told that they were neither plundering nor burning, but were simply demanding provisions for themselves and fodder for their horses, and were searching for him.

He knew by now their tenacity, their stubbornness in pursuit of an aim, and he was seized with deadly fear. Except for his body-guard, he had no army. Afghanistan had been a very recent conquest. He did not know whether he could trust the loyalty of its mountain princes, and so he fled westward into Khorassan, a thickly populated province with flourishing cities, which had belonged already to his father. On the way he urged the inhabitants of unfortified places and the open country to leave their dwellings, since they had no hope of escape from the Mongols who would burn everything; and at the same time he inculcated upon the garrisons of the fortresses the need to resist to the last drop of blood.

The Persian and Arabian historians blame Mohammed for his irresolution and lack of a definite plan; but his commands showed that, in truth, he had carefully considered what he was about. He followed the same tactics which six hundred years later Kutusoff successfully applied against Napoleon. He wanted to depopulate the country through which the Mongols would have to pass, that his enemies might be deprived of the chance of obtaining food, and that there might be no potential slaves for them to employ in siege operations. At the same time he wanted the defensible fortresses to hold out as long as possible, so as to hinder the enemy's advance until, farther to the west, he and his sons could get together a sufficiently large army.

But he underestimated the speed and fighting energy of his foe, and did not allow for the effect of Jenghiz Khan's plan of separating him from his subjects. Already in Merv, the city of the rose-gardens, he heard that Jenghiz Khan had taken the reputedly impregnable Samarkand after only three days' siege. To begin with the garrison had tried a sally, and was pushed back with great slaughter. Next day the Mongols carried their trenches so close to the gates that no further egress was possible, and even the war-elephants could not be used.

Then the drama of Bokhara was renewed in Samarkand. The Sheikh-ul-Islam, the mufti, the cadis, demanded that the gates should be opened. They reminded the populace that Samarkand

was an independent khanate; that only seven years before Mohammed had treacherously lured their own beloved Khan Osman out of the city and killed him; that in Kara-Khitai Jenghiz Khan had opened the mosques and was protecting the Moslems. A revolt ensued. Thirty thousand of the garrison (men of Turkish stock) went over to the Mongols; the remainder shut themselves up in the citadel, and the gates of the town were opened to the conqueror.

That very same day, the walls were torn down, and the moats were filled and levelled. The Sheikh-ul-Islam and 50,000 families which had supported him were allowed to remain in the city, while the Mongols drove the remainder of the population into the open country. Jenghiz Khan picked out 30,000 artists and handicraftsmen as gifts to his sons and army leaders; the younger men were compelled to build earthworks, and some of them were drafted into the army; the rest were butchered. The same fate befell the 30,000 Turks, with their generals and lesser officers, for Jenghiz made it a principle to put no faith in traitors. A few days later, the citadel was taken by storm and burned.

Now the Shah knew what danger threatened him. No harm whatever had been done to the Sheikh-ul-Islam or to the latter's retainers; indeed, two of the Sheikh's friends had been appointed viceroys, with no more than one Mongolian official as associate. At such a price the Persian population of Merv would unquestionably be ready to deliver him up to his enemies.

He therefore left Merv, and fled south-westward, over the mountains to Nishapur.

From this strong fortress-city he wrote to his mother who was at Urganj (the capital of Khwarizm proper) on the lower waters of the Amu-Darya not far from the Sea of Aral asking her to come with his harem and his little children to Khorassan, since Khwarizm proper would be Jenghiz Khan's next objective after the capture of Samarkand.

Meanwhile Sabutai and Jebei had reached Balkh, Mohammed's first place of refuge. It surrendered without resistance.

Learning of the Shah's flight westward, they hotly pursued

him. For weeks they followed his trail, unrelentingly, covering as much as eighty miles a day, riding even their spare horses to exhaustion and pursuing with the eagerness of bloodhounds on the trail. Herat, Merv, and a number of lesser towns surrendered at the prompting of the sheiks and imams, providing the hunters with food and fodder. These "well-behaved" places were left uninjured, and were even put in charge of native commandants. But any city that offered resistance was ruthlessly conquered and burned. Only the stronger fortresses, which would have delayed the pursuit, were left unstormed. But when from the top of the walls the inhabitants of Zavah railed at the passing Mongols and defiantly blew trumpets, Sabutai stopped his march, devoted three days to storming the fortress, massacred the inhabitants to the last man, and set fire to the ruins.

In these circumstances throughout Khorassan dissension was sown between the Persian population and the Turkish garrisons, which in general remained loyal to the Shah. Jenghiz' plan had proved successful. Mohammed no longer felt safe even behind the strong fortifications of Nishapur.

On the pretext of a hunting expedition, he escaped from Nishapur and fled farther west, where his mother and his harem were already awaiting him. But even his own troops were no longer trustworthy. He was afraid of an attempt being made on his life, slept each night in a different tent, to find in the morning that the one where he was supposed to be sleeping had been shot through with arrows.

Thenceforward he was nothing but a hunted beast in fear of death, lacking strength for resistance and even courage for a fight. His only chance seemed to be to run away, and so, attended only by the few who remained faithful to him, and a sovereign in no more than name, he hastened on across what had been his realm, westward, ever westward, through deserts, over mountains, across the whole of Persian Irak (Irak Adjemi), until he reached the point where, a couple of years earlier, he had halted on the frontier of Mesopotamia in his campaign against the Caliph. Here he stopped short for a while. What had he in mind

to do? Did he plan to throw himself upon the mercy of his old enemy? In the end he turned for the second time at the same spot, no longer now a conqueror at the head of a huge army, but a miserable fugitive, trying to save his life from the bloodhounds who were tracking him down.

For Sabutai and Jebei did not desist from their pursuit. When they reached Nishapur to hear that the Shah had decamped, they demanded provisions for themselves and fodder for their horses. Jebei issued a warning to the inhabitants: "Set not your trust in the strength of your walls nor in the number of your troops nor in the sharpness of your weapons, but do your utmost to help any Mongolian detachment that may arrive and to do whatever you are told. Thus only can you preserve your houses and your property." Then they resumed the chase.

On the way, in a fortress, they captured the Shah's mother and his harem, and in another place they seized his crown-treasure. Everything was sent under guard to the camp near Samarkand where Jenghiz Khan had taken up his quarters and was quietly awaiting news as to the result of the 2,000 miles' hunt by Sabutai and Jebei.

In front of the old royal city of Rai (near the modern Teheran) an army of 30,000 men resisted their progress. It was defeated and dispersed. The inhabitants of the city were divided into two parties. One of these secured the favour of the Mongols, got the better of their adversaries, and mowed them down. Sabutai rode into the fortress, and watched the massacre. What was the use, he thought, of trusting men who thus hated their brethren? Turning on his proteges, he slaughtered them to the last man. Of Rai he left nothing but smoking ruins.

Beyond Hamadan, the pursuers lost the trail. In small detachments, the Mongols scoured the country. One of these detachments encountered a cavalry squadron and charged it. Arrows were fired at the rider of a fine horse, who was actually wounded, but the horse was uninjured and the rider escaped. He was the Shah, who had changed the direction of his flight, and was now making northward for the Caspian.

Sabutai continued the chase, but when he reached the shore it was only to see a sail in the distance, showing that Mohammed had once more eluded him.

Here, on a lonely islet in the Caspian, died Mohammed Alaed-Din, one of the greatest conquerors and mightiest rulers of his day, a broken man and in such desperate poverty that those who were with him could not even buy him a shroud, but buried him on the island in the ragged clothing he wore.

Sabutai, not having yet learned the tragic fate of Mohammed, sent a swift messenger to Jenghiz Khan to report that the Shah had vanished northward for an unknown destination. Then he gave his men and horses a rest, settling down into winter quarters on the flats beside the Caspian.

It was news of this troop led by Sabutai and Jebei, on their ride in pursuit of the Shah of Khwarizmia, and their excursions in the neighbourhood of their winter camp, which reached the crusaders at Damietta and filled their hearts with joy. Stories of the Mongol raid, in conjunction with reminiscences of the legend of Prester John and with rumours about the embassy sent to Jenghiz by the Caliph and the Patriarch of Bagdad, inspired, next spring, Jacques de Vitry's extravagant letter to the Pope and monarchs in Europe. The enemies of the Moslem Shah were distorted into Christian warriors; Jenghiz Khan became King David, a grandson of Prester John; and the northward deviation of the Mongols in pursuit of Mohammed to the Caspian, was supposed to be the outcome of a plan to safeguard communications before proceeding to the conquest of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER X

A WAR OF ANNIHILATION

I

BETWEEN Samarkand and Bokhara, amid forests, parks, and orchards, the summer-camp of the Mongols extended for miles. They were strictly divided according to uluss (fief), tuman (myriad), race, tribe, and clan. Here they drilled young Persians and Turks, who were to be used, subsequently, as a first wave in the attacks upon the fortresses of their own country. The best Moslem engineers were employed in manufacturing new catapults, mangonels, battering-rams, that were to excel anything of the kind previously made. Ogatai, Jenghiz Khan's third son, himself a man of considerable ability who had been appointed master of the ordnance, superintended the work, and many of the pleasure-palaces hidden away among the peach-blossoms and apricot-blossoms were destroyed when the machines were put to a practical test. Mongols and Chinese learned from the chemists of the West how to use "flame-throwers" which squirted burning naphtha against the enemy—this being the terrible weapon with which the Saracens had been accustomed to sow devastation among the Crusaders.

Nevertheless, this was, on the whole, a period of inaction, and Jenghiz noted with concern that rest and ease did not suit his Mongols. They were abandoning the strictness and simplicity of nomadic life, and were learning to deck themselves in finery. Sloth gave rise to jealousies and intrigues. Juji surrounded himself with courtiers, and had troops of singers and lute-players; Ogatai and Tuli took such pleasure in the new drink made from the vine that they wholly forgot the Yasak's prohibition of frequent intoxication. "No one should get drunk more than

three times in a month. Twice would be better still. Once would be even more praiseworthy. Never to get drunk would be best of all—but where shall we find anyone so strict as this?” Jenghiz was far too practical to demand the impossible, but it distressed him to find that they all wanted to live wholly for pleasure.

He complained bitterly to his Chinese friend Yeliu-Ch’uts’ai:

“Our descendants will wear gold-embroidered clothing, will eat fat foods and delicate morsels, will ride thoroughbred horses and embrace beautiful women; but they will not say that their fathers and their elder brothers had got these things together for them. They will forget us and the days when such things happened.”

Yeliu-Ch’uts’ai was the only member of his circle to whom the Khan of Khans could speak freely of his troubles and his fears.

The Mongolian realm was as yet far from being firmly established. No definitive conquest had hitherto been made, and Jenghiz was beginning to be aware of the onset of old age. He was as strong as ever, and took the same delight in hunting and in battle; but he was now in his sixtieth year, and had of late grown fat and somewhat cumbrous. Necessarily, his thoughts turned much to what would happen when he had passed away; and it was plain to him that everything depended upon himself, that none of his sons was likely to be an adequate successor, one who would worthily continue and perfect his work. Was there still a chance of his being able to consolidate it? Otherwise, what would happen to his empire? These townsfolk could do such great things and knew so much. Among them there were far more old men than among the nomads, although physically they were much weaker. Had they perhaps some expedient for lengthening life?

Yeliu-Ch’uts’ai said he knew nothing of any such means. But in the Kin realm there lived as a recluse an elderly sage named Ch’ang-Ch’un who was master of the Tao (the Way)—the doctrine of the mystery of everlasting life. Perhaps he might know something.

Immediately Jenghiz Khan, the barbaric "Lord of the World", commanded his prime minister to write to the "Lord of Wisdom" an epistle such as never before can an emperor have written to a philosopher.

The philosopher belonged to the people whom the Emperor had subjugated, whose country he had laid waste, and so Jenghiz began with a justification of his wars and his conquests:

"Heaven abandoned Kin because it sank into wantonness and luxury. For my own part, I detest luxury and practise moderation. I have only one coat and one food. I eat the same diet as the humblest of my herdsmen, and have no inordinate passions. In military enterprises I always take the lead, and never lag behind in battle. That is why I have succeeded in performing a great work and in uniting the whole world under one rule. But if my mission is high, so are the duties it imposes upon me arduous. I consider the people to be my children, and ever since I mounted the throne I have made it my chief concern to rule well. But I am afraid there may be something lacking to my government. To cross a river, we need boats and rudders. In like manner we need wise men to keep a realm in good order. I myself have no exceptional qualities, but I love gifted men as my brothers; we always agree in our views, and find ourselves drawn together by mutual liking. But I have not yet discovered worthy men for the places of the highest Three and the highest Nine.

"Now I have learned that you, Master, are working in the right Way and have found the truth. Your sanctity is manifest; you follow the strictest rules of the ancient sages; and persons who strive towards sanctity betake themselves to you. But what am I to do? I cannot come to you. I can do no more than descend from my throne and stand by your side if you come to me. Have no fear, therefore, of the mountains and the plains which keep us apart; take no thought for the extent of the sandy desert; but have compassion on mankind, and come hither to impart to me the means of lengthening my days. I have instructed my adjutant to prepare an escort and a conveyance for you. I myself shall serve you, and I hope that you will leave me at least a

trifle of your wisdom. Say only one word to me, and I shall be happy."

Through the reverential phrases of this letter there breathed a command which was not to be misunderstood; and Ch'ang-Ch'un, who, being faithful to the doctrine of Lao-tsze, preferred retirement to public honour, and had already rejected invitations from the Kin emperors and the Sung emperors, now found it of no avail to plead age, infirmity, and the terrors of the long road. Jenghiz Khan's adjutant knew that it would cost him his own head should he fail to bring the sage back with him, and so he was ready to provide for all possible comfort and conveniences on the march; but the old man was given no choice and had to cross the fifty degrees of longitude between Shan-tung and Samarkand, where Jenghiz, in leisure moments, assembled the Mohammedan sages and sheikhs to instruct him in the commands of the Prophet. But they secured very little approval from their royal master:

"Pilgrimage to Mecca is an absurdity," said Jenghiz. "God is to be found everywhere on earth, and it is not needful to travel to any specific place in order to make obeisance before Him." The Mongol sovereign was no less categorical in his rejection of the classification of beasts as clean and unclean, saying: "All alike are created by God, and man can eat anything he pleases." As to the separation of the faithful from the infidel and the persecution of the latter, he said: "You may love one another as much as you please, but you may only persecute and slay when I command. Under my rule everyone may pray to any god he pleases, my only orders being observance of the laws established by Jenghiz Khan."

The immediate upshot of these utterances was that the Shiahhs drove out the moolahs imposed upon them by the Sunnis, that the Nestorian Christians were able again to place crosses above their churches, that the Jews reopened their synagogues and the Parsees relighted the sacred fires in their temples. People of every sect felt secure, resumed their ordinary occupations; and the land between the Syr-Darya and the Amu-Darya which had borne the

initial violence of Jenghiz Khan's incursions began to recover from the devastations of war.

II

Sabutai's report that the Shah had vanished, disturbed the repose of camp-life.

By sailing away northward, the Shah might betake himself to his tribal home beside the Sea of Aral, so Jenghiz Khan prepared for a new campaign.

Juji and Jagatai must at once leave for the original dominion of Khwarizm. But since this petty land had had the strength to conquer so vast a realm for Shah Mahommed, a severe struggle might be impending, and the Khakan never lacked caution. The troops must take with them Ogatai's arsenal of new siege-machines.

To make trial of these inventions, he himself advanced against the still unconquered fortress of Termed on the upper Amu-Darya—the place chosen by Ogatai for experimental purposes.

Jenghiz watched the hundredweight stone missiles fly through the air and saw the strongest walls crumble beneath their impact; he watched the pots filled with burning naphtha fall upon the roofs after their curved flight, and saw them break into pieces, whereupon the buildings burst into seas of flame. For the sake of these machines, Ogatai was even forgiven his drunkenness. He must go with his brothers in command of the artillery. At the same time Jenghiz assigned to the three of them his earliest and most faithful companion Bogurchi as chief-of-staff who was to report to him privately concerning everything that happened. This was the first time he had sent his sons together on a raid of conquest, and he wanted precise information as to how they got on with one another and how well they could co-operate.

Jenghiz himself remained at his observation post keeping with him his youngest son Tuli, ready in case of need to advance north, west, or south as circumstances rendered desirable. But he had had enough of inactive camp-life, which made his warriors

soft, so in the middle of hostile country, the mountainous region of Termed, he organised a great hunting-drive—this being the sport he had long since devised to keep his Mongols in good trim during the intervals between campaigns.

For the first time since the Mohammedan world had come into existence did the Moslems see a hunt of this sort, and their astonished chroniclers have given us a precise description of it:

Staff officers rode through the forests and marked off the chosen area for the drive, this being called the “nerkeh”, while the more immediate hunting-ground was termed the “gerkeh”. The army set forth, in a single or double row of horsemen, to surround the appointed areas of forest, which they began to beat amid a tremendous clamour of drums, kettledrums, and cymbals, drawing inward from all sides. No beast must be allowed to escape from within the circle. No thicket, no area of marshland, no cave must remain unsearched. Behind the beaters rode officers, controlling their every action. Woe to him who left a bear’s lair undiscovered in a thicket, and woe to him after whose passing any wild beast was found. Where the beaters had passed, the forest must be totally voided of game, must be left dumb and empty, dead as it were.

The Mongols were in full war-kit, but they must not use their weapons. If a bear, a tiger, a pack of wolves or a herd of wild swine should charge the circle, the men must only raise their shields of woven faggots for defence. Though no beast must escape the circle, none might be wounded.

Up hill and down dale, across gorges and over precipices, the wild inhabitants of the encompassed area were driven. No declivity, however steep, must be avoided, and every river must be swum across. By night a multiple ring of fires surrounded the doomed area as the circle narrowed, the rows of beaters being now four or five thick. Day by day it became more difficult to keep in the game. More and more savage grew the attacks of the beasts of prey. Driven back in their tracks, they turned in their mad wrath upon roe-deer and chamois, tearing their prey to pieces. Inexorably the ring of beaters closed in upon them. So matters

continued for months. At the weaker spots the Khakan would sometimes himself appear and attentively watch the "war-tactics" of his troops.

At length the animal population of a huge "nerkeh" had been concentrated into a very small space, the "gerkeh". They were huddled within an impenetrable ring of death.

Suddenly a gap would open in this ring, and through it, heralded by such an infernal blowing of trumpets and clashing of cymbals that even the wildest beasts were daunted, the Khakan rode, followed by the princes and his suite. Jenghiz, armed with scimitar and bow and arrow, opened the hunt, by himself laying low a tiger, a bear, or a mighty tusker. Then he withdrew to a mound where his throne had been set up, and the princes, the noyons, and the generals could show their skill. After them came the hunters of lesser rank far into the "gerkeh", slaughtering now mainly insignificant game unless of a sudden some surviving dangerous beast of prey should charge out of a thicket. When this happened the fortunate man might display his valour and his skill before the Khan of Khans, perhaps earning praise or promotion.

When the greater part of the game had been slaughtered, the grandsons of the Khan demanded grace for the young and the lesser beasts, and the Khan would grant these their lives. A signal ended the hunt, and the terrified creatures that had had the luck to escape the massacre could return to the freedom of the forests.

The drive near Termed continued for four months. For four months in succession a hundred thousand Mongols rode recklessly over mountains and across gorges, regardless whether in the land they had conquered peace prevailed, only concerned that no beast should escape them. Meanwhile, on all sides, new enemies and new dangers were gathering against them.

III

Mohammed was dead. Before the end he appointed as successor to the throne, in place of Uslak (his mother's darling) originally

destined for that post, the bolder and more energetic Jelal ed-Din, the elder brother. Jelal ed-Din had already appeared in Khwarizm, acclaimed by the populace, and prepared to take up the fight against the Mongols.

But the Khwarizmian generals, to whom their liberties under Uslak seemed more important than did the still distant Mongols, entered into a conspiracy against Jelal ed-Din. He escaped to Khorassan, defeating on the way a corps sent against him by Jenghiz, and then suddenly disappeared from the scene. No one knew where he really was, but the wildest rumours began to circulate. There was talk of the greatness of his victory over the Mongols, of the mighty armies he was getting together, etc.

Uslak and the other Khwarizmian princes had fled before the Mongol invasion, but had been caught by the enemy forces and killed in battle. Then the Mongol army marched along the narrow fertile strip thickly beset with towns and villages that lay between the Amu-Darya and the desert on either side, plundering and ravaging as usual. One place after another fell into their hands, until their progress was arrested by the capital of Khwarizm proper, Urganj on the Amu delta. The place seemed impregnable.

The new siege-engines failed of their effect, since in these flats there were no rocks and no blocks of stone. Trees were felled, and sawn into lengths of suitable size which were soaked in water till they became heavy enough to use as missiles. But these proved ineffective substitutes. The Mongols tried to storm the walls, but were repulsed every time with terrible slaughter.

Then, towards the close of the great hunt near Termed, there appeared before Jenghiz Khan one of the messengers sent by the faithful Bogurchi. He reported that there had been serious dissensions between Prince Juji and Prince Jagatai. Juji regarded the capital as belonging to his dominion and wanted to hold command there; Jagatai considered that the whole stretch reaching down to the Sea of Aral was his fief, promised him by the Khakan, and was issuing orders contradictory to Juji's.

The Khakan looked gloomy. He dispatched two arrow-messengers.

One of them went to Khwarizm, bearing instructions that the supreme command of the army was transferred to Ogatai, and that Juji and Jagatai were to become their brother's subordinates.

No one ventured to dispute Jenghiz Khan's orders.

However enraged Juji and Jagatai might be at their humiliation, they obeyed. Since Ogatai was shrewd enough not to make an undue use of his authority, but, in an accommodating spirit, consulted now with one and now with the other, unity was soon restored, and under his direction the invaders began to divert the course of the Amu-Darya above Urganj.

The second messenger hastened to the Caspian. Sabutai was to return to the Khakan with all possible speed.

Sabutai bandaged head and trunk, after the manner of the arrow-messengers, sprang on to his horse, and rode day and night. At the Mongol posts, established along the road every twenty-five or thirty miles, the best mounts were awaiting him as relays. Occasionally he would stop to eat a meal, and now and again he would snatch a few hours' sleep before leaping into the saddle and continuing his journey. Riding thus at the utmost speed by day and by night, in little more than a week he covered the 1,200 miles which had separated him from his master. Jenghiz Khan was impatiently awaiting his Orlok, for, while the Mongolian princes, drunken with victory, were already quarrelling over the possession of provinces not yet conquered, and while the army leaders were dreaming of new ventures and splendid deeds, the Khakan alone realised the gravity of the situation.

He had invaded the country with hard upon a quarter of a million warriors. Now 30,000 Mongols were stationed somewhere in the west under Sabutai and Jebei; 50,000 had marched northward with his elder sons; the King of the Uighurs and the Khan of Almalik wanted to lead their men home, and he had not opposed their wishes, thinking it inadvisable to keep dissatisfied and perhaps untrustworthy elements among his main troops. Then there had been heavy losses in numerous severe actions. The army now at his disposal did not number more than 100,000 men, for, however much the roster might be swelled by native

levies, it was only upon these 100,000 that he could confidently depend at a decisive moment, while opposed to him was a realm whose boundaries he did not even know.

During the two years since Juji crossed the Terek-Davan pass into the Fergana Valley, the Mongols, in an uninterrupted series of victories, had laid the Mohammedan world in ruins; but the only parts hitherto effectively conquered were the Transoxanian provinces, the extreme east of the Khwarizmian Empire. Now, in Khwarizm proper, Ogatai was trying to effect the conquest of the north. Southward lay the mountain country of Afghanistan where no Mongol riders had hitherto set foot. As for Khorassan, in the adjoining west, it knew only of Sabutai's lightning raid.

It is true that most of the towns of Persia had acknowledged his suzerainty and accepted his viceroys; but did they feel genuine loyalty, or had they merely made a cunning submission to escape being immediately plundered, being really determined to assemble their forces and hurl themselves upon him?

If the bold and resolute Jelal ed-Din were now to summon them to the fight, would not this prove the signal for a universal revolt, bringing millions upon millions of soldiers into the field against Jenghiz? One decisive defeat would rob him of the result of twenty years' unceasing victory and would annihilate his realm. He had no reserves, was not supported by a vigorous hinterland bound to him by long tradition. All his fighting forces were with him in this campaign, and if the army was beaten, the races and tribes he had consolidated would fall asunder and begin a general struggle of all against all.

He had summoned Sabutai to discuss the possible strength of his adversaries, for Sabutai, accompanied by Jebei, had ridden hither and thither throughout the Khwarizmian Empire in pursuit of Shah Mohammed.

The first part of Sabutai's report concerned the wealthy Khorassan, its powerful fortresses, and its gigantic cities with imposing walls. It stretched from Herat to Merv, and from Merv to Nishapur. Then the country passed into a huge salty steppe which was scarcely penetrable. It was necessary to ride for many

days along the margin of the steppe among barren mountains to reach a second rich country which was thickly populated—Persian Irak (Irak Adjemi).

“How long would it take a Mohammedan army to march from Irak to Khorassan?” asked Jenghiz Khan.

“In summer, it would not get to Khorassan at all,” answered Sabutai, “for the sun burns the grass and dries up the rivers. In winter the horses of the Moslems do not know how to scrape up fodder from beneath the snow. Only at the present season, in springtime, or else in the autumn, could one of the Shah’s armies undertake this campaign, and they would have to drive with them many herds and transport much baggage—I have seen no such army in Persian Irak.”

This report decided the subsequent conduct of the war.

If the west and the east could not join forces to help one another (and Sabutai knew nothing as to the levying of an army in the west), this signified that Jelal ed-Din must be somewhere in the east, and that in case of a rising Jenghiz would be faced only by Afghanistan and Khorassan. However strong these countries might be, their borders lay within a range of 600 miles—and 600 miles were a distance along which the Mongolian armies could operate in such a way that in case of need they could come swiftly to one another’s help. It did not matter that he now had available no more than his main armies of 100,000 men, the additional 30,000 being beside the Caspian under Sabutai and Jebei.

These facts sealed for centuries the destiny of Russia, brought desolation upon south-eastern Europe, and spread panic throughout the European continent.

During his winter in the west, Sabutai had made a survey of the neighbouring western countries, raiding Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Kurdistan. Beyond the sea on one of whose islands Shah Mohammed had died, arose more mountains, and he had learned that if you crossed this rocky girdle you would reach a land of narrow-faced men with light hair and blue eyes. These must be the people of whom the inhabitants of Kipchak spoke as their

western neighbours. It would be possible, therefore, to ride round the huge inland sea and return to Mongolia through the Kipchak steppes.

Sabutai and Jebei were eager to undertake this ride.

Jenghiz Khan had nothing to say against it. He had bestowed upon Juji the world westward of the Irtysh, "so far as the hoof of a Mongolian horse can travel." These lands beside the Caspian belonged, therefore, to Juji's fief. It was always desirable to make acquaintance with one's neighbours.

Sabutai was granted permission to cross the chain of mountains that lay beyond the Caspian, to find out what sort of peoples dwelt there, how great their realms were, what sort of armies they had.

He might spend three years upon the raid, said the Khakan. Then he must return into Mongolia by the route which led northward of the Caspian.

Sabutai remounted, and in the course of another fortnight rode back to join his troops.

IV

It was true that Jelal ed-Din was in the eastern part of what had been the Khwarizmian Empire. In the heart of the mountainous country of Afghanistan, near Ghazni, he was assembling an army against the Mongols.

Now there happened what Jenghiz Khan had foreseen. Revolt flamed up throughout the country.

In every province, in every town, were Khans, Emirs, Sheikhs, and Imams whose habit it had been to take no part in the troubles among the great Lords and to bow before the victor of the moment. Since they had suffered much under Mohammed's tyranny, they had been ready, so long as there was no interference with Islam, to accommodate themselves to Jenghiz Khan's rule, although according to the laws of the Prophet it would be meritorious to fight the "infidel dog". But his religious tolerance

to persons holding other creeds than the Mohammedan excited their fanaticism, and the looting and cruelty of the Mongol invaders intensified the hatred felt by the Moslems—so when, now, a young Moslem Shah who had already shown his courage and capacity, summoned his people to a Holy War, they were ready to follow him. Islam armed itself for the struggle.

From all sides there came tidings of the assassination of viceroys and of native officials appointed by the Mongols, the massacre of their partisans, attacks upon isolated posts and small detachments, revolts in the towns.

At the first news of what was afoot, Jenghiz Khan dispatched Tuli, his youngest son, in command of half of the Mongolian army, into Khorassan. His orders were not to conquer, not to subjugate, but simply to exterminate.

What now followed was a war of annihilation on the part of 100,000 men thoroughly well equipped and subjected to an iron discipline, against a fanatical enemy, undisciplined and disunited, but animated with savage valour, and no less cruel whenever they gained the victory. It was a war for life or death, hard-fought and pitiless.

Tuli's army increased with every village he conquered and with every fortress he stormed. He never had to leave garrisons behind in occupation, for where he passed there was nothing left but uninhabited ruins. Of towns which had contained from 70,000 to 100,000 inhabitants nothing remained alive, "neither a cat nor a dog". Artists, handicraftsmen, young women were taken prisoner. The men capable of bearing arms were carried along, driven as the first wave of assault against the next fortress, knowing that if they gave ground they would be cut down by the Mongols.

This Mongol avalanche overwhelmed every attempt at resistance. The huge city of Merv defended itself desperately for three weeks; but the mighty fortress of Nishapur could only hold out against Tuli for three days. For the storm, he had with him an artillery park containing 3,000 machines flinging heavy incendiary arrows, 300 catapults, 700 mangonels to discharge

pots filled with burning naphtha, 4,000 storming-ladders, and 2,500 sacks of earth for filling up moats.

Offers of surrender were of no avail should the slightest resistance be shown.

Once only, in the case of the last fortress of Khorassan, namely Herat, did Tuli, weary of months of strangling and throat-cutting, grant grace to the inhabitants after the commandant had fallen. Except for the 12,000 men who would not yield but defended themselves to the last, all the inhabitants were spared.

Hardly had Tuli got back to Jenghiz Khan when the news arrived that Herat had again revolted, and that the governor left in charge had been assassinated.

Thereupon Jenghiz Khan reproached Tuli, saying:

"Why did this rising take place? How has it come about that the sword has failed of its effect so far as these people of Herat are concerned?"

He dispatched an Orlok with a new army, his orders being succinct:

"Since dead men have come to life again I command you to strike their heads from their bodies."

This order was literally obeyed. When the town was taken and the population massacred, the Orlok, already on the return journey, sent back 2,000 of his men to make sure that there was no one alive among the ruins. Actually these emissaries found 3,000 survivors, who were promptly slain. When the Mongol forces had withdrawn for the second time, from the last lurking-places in the city whose armed garrison alone had consisted of more than 100,000 men, there crept forth 16 persons, who were joined, after a time, by 24 more from the suburbs. These 40 were all that were left alive.

Such a war of extermination was carried forward on all the fighting fronts.

In Khwarizm proper, Ogatai at length succeeded in taking Urganj by storm. The diversion of the course of the Amu-Darya did not succeed in enforcing surrender, for the inhabitants had

dug a sufficiency of wells before the flow of the river through the town ceased. Hatred and embitterment were the same on both sides. Once the townsfolk succeeded in cutting off a detachment of 3,000 Mongols, and they were slain to the last man. Then Ogatai commanded that the moats should be filled with billets of wood and with faggots, and, while a hail of flaming naphtha pots was being flung into the city, the Mongols climbed the walls. The Khwarizmians defended themselves street by street and house by house. For seven days the battle raged in the narrow alleys of the capital, and then resistance broke. The defenceless remainder was driven out into the fields, and, after handicraftsmen, artists, and young women had, according to custom, been preserved for further use, the "rejects" were butchered. The chroniclers declare that each of the Mongols slew four-and-twenty persons.

Then everything of value was brought forth from the town, the conquerors set light to the ruins, and readmitted the river to the town, so that any who might still be left alive in cellars and other hiding-places were drowned. This double deflection of its course made such a change in the Amu-Darya that geographers are still in doubt as to whether one of its arms may not have flowed into the Caspian, the various depressions known as the Kelif-Usboi being the ancient channel, since there seems to be no other way of accounting for this otherwise inexplicable furrow which runs for hundreds of miles. The drying up of the channel probably converted the whole region between the Aral and the Caspian into the existing desert.

Jenghiz himself, meanwhile, was "cleaning up" the foothills of the Hindu Kush. He took Balkh, Talikhan, and Kerduan. Before the mountain fortress of Bamian, fell his grandson Moatugan, a son of Jagatai. The death of this youth, who was a favourite of his, greatly enraged the Khakan. He commanded that the fortress should instantly be stormed and that everything alive within it, man and beast, should be slain. The whole neighbourhood should be nothing but a heap of ruins in memory of Jenghiz Khan's grandson; and as late as a hundred years afterwards this sometime

blooming valley was desert and uninhabited, being known locally as "Mobalig"—the accursed spot.

During the destruction of Bamian, Ogatai and Jagatai returned from Khwarizm, but Juji, still furious at the humiliation of having been forced to obey his younger brother, had withdrawn into his fief, and his two brothers brought the news of this to their father.

"These are my sons, for whom I take so much pains, for whom I subjugate nations and conquer an empire. They show me nothing but refractoriness and disobedience," exclaimed Jenghiz looking with feigned anger at Jagatai.

Jagatai, feeling that his father was blaming him for the quarrel with Juji and for Juji's departure, fell on his knees and swore that he would rather die than be disobedient.

Twice Jenghiz repeated the question whether Jagatai would obey his every command, and when Jagatai had twice sworn to do so, Jenghiz called out:

"Your son Moatugan is dead. I forbid you to weep or complain."

As if thunderstruck, Jagatai stood gazing at his father, but neither then nor later did he utter any plaint for the loss of his son.

V

The small but well-organised minority had conquered, but the land had had its fill of death and desolation. Vast cities lay in ruins and were depopulated. Never before, neither during the struggle in Mongolia nor during the campaign in China had Jenghiz' army wrought such havoc. Terror prevailed universally from the Sea of Aral to the Persian Desert. Only in whispers did the survivors speak of "the Accursed". So widespread was the panic that an unsupported Mongolian horseman could come spurring into a village, cut down dozens of persons, and drive off the cattle without anyone daring to raise a hand against him. The populace had lost the capacity for resistance.

Many a time must Jenghiz Khan himself have had his doubts

concerning the advisability of such a way of making war, and on one occasion, in conversation with an Afghan prince whom Tuli had sent him as a prisoner, and with whom he talked from time to time, he asked:

"Do you think that this bloodshed will remain for ever in people's memories?"

The prince asked for a pledge that no harm should be done if he answered truthfully, and then replied:

"If Jenghiz Khan continues this campaign of murder, no one will be left alive to harbour the memory of bloodshed."

When Jenghiz had had the answer interpreted, his face clouded with wrath, and he broke the arrow he was holding in his hand. But, a moment later, his countenance cleared once more, and he contemptuously said: "What do these people matter to me? There are other countries and many other races, and among them my fame will live on, even if in every corner of the land to which the hoofs of Mohammed's charger have strayed, such loot and murder should continue by permission."

Indeed, this horrible war was not yet over.

In Ghazni, amid the mountains of Afghanistan, was Jelal ed-Din, summoning the Afghans to resistance.

Jenghiz sent Shigi Kutuku against him at the head of 30,000 men, and Jelal ed-Din advanced to meet the Mongols.

To make his army look larger, Shigi Kutuku had scarecrows in human form constructed of felt coverlets and straw, and bound these upon his spare horses. The ruse was almost successful. Jelal ed-Din's commanders advised him to retreat, but the young Shah was not to be intimidated. He attacked and defeated Kutuku. The Mongols fled.

Jenghiz Khan made as if the reverse was of no importance.

"Shigi Kutuku is accustomed to successes," said he. "It is time he should learn the bitterness of defeat."

Nevertheless, before the news of this victory of the foe could incite to a new general outbreak of resistance, he set forth at the head of his whole army into the mountains, accompanied by Ogatai, Jagatai, and Tuli.

The march went on without arrest right across Afghanistan. Only at Pirvan, where Shigi Kutuku had sustained his defeat, did Jenghiz, despite the urgency of the occasion, pause for a time to ride over the battlefield with the young Orlok beside him and point out the mistakes that had been made in the choice of the battle-ground and the marshalling of the troops.

But even Jelal ed-Din was unable to cope with the Khakan. Pugnacious and incredibly brave, he knew how to win a battle, but not how to turn his victory to account.

While Jenghiz' army was drawing nearer day by day, he wasted his time in celebrating his last achievement and in putting the Mongols he had captured to death by torture or by driving nails into their brains through the ears. When his vassal princes quarrelled with one another during the division of the spoils about who was to have an Arab steed, and one struck another in the face with his riding-whip, he took the side of the aggressor because the aggressor ruled over more tribes, and thereupon the other claimant of the Arab, justly offended, withdrew in the night at the head of all his men. Jelal ed-Din, when Jenghiz approached, had no resource but in flight.

Jenghiz Khan's ride across Afghanistan was so swift that the mountaineers, who had trusted in the security of their upland fastnesses, were never able to organise resistance. Every stronghold surrendered without striking a blow, and was consequently spared destruction.

At length the Mongols overtook the young Shah on the banks of the Indus. For the first time in his life Jenghiz Khan was in command of a force numerically superior to that of the enemy, and nevertheless the battle which now took place was a triumph for Jelal ed-Din. The memory of it is still vivid in the East. It has become the theme of a saga, which ignores Mohammed and makes of his more valiant son Jenghiz Khan's chief enemy.

Before the battle, Jenghiz gave orders that Jelal ed-Din was to be taken alive, feeling sure that as soon as he had the Shah in his hands rebellion and resistance to his own authority would instantly come to an end. But Jelal ed-Din was not to be captured

so easily. When his forces had been surrounded, at the head of the 700 men of his body-guard he flung himself once more against the Mongols, cut through their ranks, recaptured the colours that had been taken by the enemy, wheeled about, again forced his way through the Mongols, and then, seated on his charger, leapt from the top of a sixty-foot cliff into the Indus and swam over the river bearing the banner in his hand.

Amazed by so much courage, even now Jenghiz forbade his men to shoot at Jelal ed-Din.

"It seems incredible that such a father should have produced such a son!" he said, and held up Jelal ed-Din's boldness and resolution as an example to his own sons.

Still, much as he admired this bravery, it did not prevent his sending an army across the Indus in pursuit. It ravaged the districts of Peshawar, Lahore, and Multan, but did not find the Shah, and returned north-eastward at the beginning of spring when the heat was becoming intolerable to the Mongols. Passing through Afghanistan, Ogatai completed the subjugation of the mountaineers, while Jagatai conquered also Kerman and Baluchistan.

Jelal ed-Din, meanwhile, at the head of the fifty men who had joined in his flight across the Indus, was attacking the unwarlike Hindus. Having subjugated a number of tribes, he marched on Delhi, compelling its sovereign to receive him and give him his daughter in marriage. Here he awaited the withdrawal of the Mongolian army. A few years later, having returned to Afghanistan, after Jenghiz Khan's death he invaded Persia, but then, again threatened by a Mongolian army, he had to flee into Asia Minor, where he was slain during a raid.

VI

The battle beside the Indus sealed the defeat of the world of Islam. The Khwarizmian Empire had ceased to exist. The few principalities that still remained independent, such as Fars,

Luristan, and Kurdistan, could be left for a subsequent campaign. The minor actions that still remained to be fought had a merely local importance. From the Sea of Japan to the Caspian, from Korea to the Caucasus, Jenghiz Khan's word was law. The Eternal Blue Heaven had appointed him to rule all the nations of the world.

But his mission was not yet fulfilled. When Sabutai should return from the west it would be time to think of the conquest of the lands at present outside his sway, but this could not be for two years yet. Was he meanwhile to pursue Jelal ed-Din into Hindustan and subjugate the country that had given refuge to his enemy? Or would it be better to return to Mongolia by way of Tibet, the legendary homeland of his race, and, on the way, annex Tibet to his empire?

It was now spring. Owing to the heat of the Indian climate, which was disastrous to the men of the steppes, he postponed any design on that quarter till the ensuing winter, and sent the officers of his General Staff into the Pamirs, to seek for passes leading into Tibet. They returned to inform him that the passes were too difficult for an army encumbered with siege implements and a baggage-train. Very well, he would await the winter, then march back into India.

Saga relates that, during a ride into the Hindu Kush, Jenghiz Khan met an animal as large as a stag, of a green colour and equipped with a single horn. This creature spoke to him with a human voice and bade him return. As usual, now, Jenghiz asked Yeliu Ch'uts'ai about the strange beast, and Yeliu Ch'uts'ai said he had heard of the unicorn. It was called Kio-tuan, and could speak all the languages of the world. It was always sent by Heaven to avert unprincipled bloodshed. Jenghiz Khan had conquered the realm of the west, but India, the realm of the south, had done him no harm. Even though he was Heaven's favourite son, the other nations were likewise the children of God and he must love them as his brothers. If he wished to remain in Heaven's good graces, he must leave the inhabitants of this foreign country to their own devices.

As if in token of the truth of this interpretation of the strange phenomenon, a terrible epidemic broke out among the Mongolian troops that had returned from India, an illness like that which had visited the army towards the close of the Chinese campaign.

Jenghiz Khan had never resisted the will of Heaven. This time, too, he bowed before the storm. He would return home along the old route across the Amu-Darya.

CHAPTER XI

THE SAGE FROM CHINA

I

SEVENTY-TWO years of age was the Chinese philosopher Ch'ang-Ch'un when, in May 1220, he set forth on his long westward journey across fifty degrees of longitude. Never before in the history of the world, except in ancient China where philosophers were sometimes appointed to the highest offices of State, had an emperor honoured a sage as the barbarian chieftain Jenghiz Khan honoured the Taoist monk Ch'ang-Ch'un. The sage's journey was like a triumphal campaign. To any place where he rested for a while, monks and the populace made pilgrimage in crowds to pay him reverence. Mongolian princes and princesses through whose territories he travelled were instructed to receive him with the highest honours. When, after a year and a half, he reached Samarkand, no less a man than Bogurchi, the chief of the Orlok, was sent to conduct him during the last stages of travel into the Hindu Kush, the mountains where the Khakan had encamped after the battle beside the Indus.

Jenghiz Khan greeted him with the words:

"Other emperors have invited you, but you rejected their invitations. Now, in order to visit me, you have travelled 10,000 li. I am greatly honoured."

The hermit was no flatterer. He had taken this journey not voluntarily but perforce, and so he was not disposed to mince his words:

"The 'Wild Man of the Mountains' has come at Your Majesty's command," he replied. "It was the will of Heaven."

He did not fall upon his knees, he did not kowtow, but merely bowed in token of respect, raising both hands to his head.

Jenghiz invited him to dinner, but Ch'ang-Ch'un refused the honour, saying he ate no meat; and he also refused to drink koumiss. He had brought with him from Samarkand rice and flour—all that he needed in the way of food. Jenghiz, far from taking offence, and wishing to provide his guest with food more to his taste, established a special courier service across the hundreds of miles that separated Samarkand from the Hindu Kush in order to bring Ch'ang-Ch'un vegetables and the finest fruit obtainable.

Talks between Emperor and Sage turned, without delay, upon the main question:

"Holy man from a distant land, do you know of any medicine that will make one who takes it immortal?"

Ch'ang-Ch'un smiled quietly at his host as he answered indifferently:

"There are certainly medicines that will prolong life, but there is no medicine that will grant immortality."

Dumbfounded were the Orlok as they stared at the remarkable Chinese philosopher who, after travelling 10,000 li, could tell the Khakan so bluntly that the kindness and consideration he had received were fruitless. But Jenghiz Khan made no sign of dissatisfaction, nor uttered an unfriendly word. He merely nodded, extolled the straightforwardness and truthfulness of the sage, and then asked for instruction in the doctrine of the Tao.

Day and hour were fixed for the first lesson, when tidings came of an outbreak of hostilities in the mountains. Some of the tribes had risen, and the cares of war claimed Jenghiz Khan's attention. Instruction must be indefinitely postponed, whereupon Ch'ang-Ch'un asked leave to return forthwith to Samarkand. The Khakan tried to convince him that the roads were now dangerous, and that Ch'ang-Ch'un would do better to stay in camp, but the Chinese guest replied: "The noise made by your soldiers disturbs the tranquillity of my thought." Jenghiz therefore, despite his concern with the impending campaign, sent Ch'ang-Ch'un back to Samarkand with an escort of a thousand horsemen. On the cool terraces of the summer palace at the

capital, in the shade of the splendid gardens, he could enjoy the repose he craved.

Not until autumn did Jenghiz recross the Amu-Darya. He camped close to Samarkand. Cadis, imams, and the elders of the city came to pay him homage.

This was the first time that the nomads had gained the mastery over a civilised people without settling down in the country, and it was to Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai that the difficult task was allotted of working out satisfactory relations between conquerors and conquered. He gave the towns a fixed order, assessed the taxes and other dues, and appointed everywhere administrators—who were chosen from the native population except for the Daruga, the "Residents", like those sent nowadays by the British government to live at the native courts in India. The business of these supervisors was to see to it that there should be no friction between the Mongolians and the Persians. To the Mohammedan moolahs who came to pay their respects, Jenghiz said:

"Heaven has given me the victory over your Shah whom I have conquered and annihilated. Now you must offer up prayers for me at my charge." When he was told that under Mohammed priests were taxed as well as laymen, he said with surprise: "Did the Shah, then, care so little that you should pray for his welfare?" and he exempted them from taxation.

Here, close to Samarkand, Ch'ang-Ch'un once more visited Jenghiz Khan's camp. In a tent specially chosen for the purpose, from which women were excluded, there thrice assembled, in the silence of the night when the camp as a whole was asleep, the highest dignitaries of the Mongolian realm, headed by the Khakan and his son Tuli, to hear the words of the Sage from China. No less a man than Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai, the prime minister, acted as interpreter, and, upon Jenghiz Khan's command, Ch'ang-Ch'un's utterances were recorded both in Chinese and in Mongolian.

Jenghiz Khan had conquered a world-empire. He wished to be sure that it would be firmly established for centuries to come.

Ch'ang-Ch'un smiled indulgently, saying: "A whirlwind does not last for a morning; a cloudburst is over within the day: and by whose will is this? By that of Heaven and Earth. If neither Heaven nor Earth can achieve permanence, how much less can Man do so?"

Jenghiz Khan referred to the difficulties of government.

"To rule over a great realm," said Ch'ang-Ch'un, "is like the roasting of little fish. One must not rub off their scales, must not shake them too much, must not scorch them, and must be tender and easy in the way one handles them. Only he who is just to all his subjects is a good ruler."

The Khakan grew reflective. "Should not a man take pains to ensure that his work will be carried on? If he neglect this, will it not decay?"

Ch'ang-Ch'un consoled him, saying: "What is well planted, is not easily uprooted; and what is firmly held, will not be snatched away. We must work as the Tao—the persistent, the true meaning—works: by inaction."

He explained to the Mongols the Taoist view of the world:

The inter-relations between Heaven and Earth are manifold and confusing, and yet, in the germ, they are simple and barely cognisable. But one who manages to grasp them in the germ has the Tao, the true meaning. The space betwixt Heaven and Earth is as empty as a pair of bellows; but, if one works the bellows, more air continues to emerge. It is as when one plays the flute. The Earth is the instrument, Heaven is the breath, and the Tao is the blower who, in unending succession, creates an interminable multiplicity of melodies. Even as these melodies originate out of nothing, so do all beings arise out of non-being, and return into non-being again. But, when a being has thus returned, it has not completely vanished. Even when the melodies have been dissipated, we can still hear them. Such is the working of the Tao: it procreates without possessing, it works without holding, it promotes without commanding.

To work by inaction, to promote without commanding . . . these were ideas from a very different world. They were utterly

alien to their hearers, opposed to what had ever been the custom among the Mongols. But Jenghiz Khan recognised their greatness, realised that they conveyed something worthy of respect, so he said to his Orlok:

“What the Sage speaks is wisdom he has learned from Heaven. I have preserved his words in the depths of my heart. Do ye the same. But they must not pass beyond ourselves.”

Nevertheless he wished Ch’ang-Ch’un to teach his sons the doctrine. He summoned a kuriltai, to which Juji, Jagatai, and Ogatai were to come; and Ch’ang-Ch’un had to await his pleasure, though he longed to return to China.

II

This was the first time a kuriltai had been summoned to consider matters that had no military bearing, a kuriltai which was not concerned with the discussion of and the preparation for a new campaign. This time the “Great Council” was a joint celebration of the victorious war, and if it lasted for months it was only because the life the Mongols were living beside the lower waters of the Syr-Darya was an ideal one to these nomads. There were daily rides, hunting of every conceivable kind, the reception of various princes for them to pay homage, the receipt and distribution of gifts, daily banquets, fine clothing, splendid weapons, beautiful women, magnificent horses, good food and good drink—and this delectable life was granted by Heaven to the Mongolian people for all time—provided only it should be guided by the Yasak, Jenghiz Khan’s legal code.

Everything was adorned with the utmost splendour. There were tents of silk and brocade; Mohammed’s golden throne, the insignia of his sometime rule, his crown and his sceptre; in front of the throne were boxes filled with diamonds, rubies, pearls, golden trinkets. Jenghiz Khan had no taste for this ornamentation, but even Yeliu-Ch’uts’ai had advised him to indulge in it, saying:

"When you get home you can do as you please, but here you must make a parade of your power and your wealth before the peoples over whom you rule."

Jenghiz Khan thought it better to comply.

But on one point he was stubborn. He would not wear any other garment than his old coat of coarse linen, or put on any trinkets. His fur cloak was of sable, and his leather cap with the protective neck-piece was trimmed with sable; but these things were proper to an aristocrat of the steppes, and an aristocrat of the steppes was what the conqueror of the world wished to remain as long as he lived. He would not wear the ornate attire of the townsmen any more than he would put on their armour or use their weapons. These things were as uncongenial to him as was the narrow life of cities. He had, indeed, given way to Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai to this extent, that during the last war the square, where the caravans were unloaded in what had been the old capital of the Naimans at Karakorum, had been built as a town. The prime minister insisted that such a fixed point was essential, so that the tribes might know to what place to send tribute, and come to regard it as a centre of administration. But Jenghiz himself had no intention of settling down there.

"Perhaps my children will live in stone houses and walled towns—not I."

Sentimentally a nomad, he wished nothing more for himself or his offspring than the untrammelled life of the nomad. His instinct told him that this was the only existence suited to his people; and now, when the slave labour of the towns offered the Mongols all the luxuries of the world, the nomadic life was still the life fitted for the master-race. In his Yasak, he had once more consolidated the foundations of this life; and yet he did not feel certain that his successors might not prefer the effeminating ease of urban life. Already his sons had so many wants different from those he had ever entertained. Above all was this true of Juji, his firstborn, to whom he was so deeply attached. It was Juji who gave him most anxiety.

Jagatai and Ogatai had already appeared at the kuriltai. From Juji there came 20,000 fine horses, dapple-grey horses of Kipchak—as a gift to the Khakan. But Juji himself did not come. He was staying in his own horde; he was a sick man.

Instantly an arrow-messenger was sent to Juji's fief, instructing Juji to attend a hunt.

A few weeks later, from the steppes of the north there were driven huge troops of wild-asses, for the distraction of the Khakan and his Orlok. But Juji once more excused himself. He was ill, and could not come.

Jenghiz Khan did not believe in this illness. Juji's nose must still be out of joint because Khwarizm proper beside the Sea of Aral had been assigned to Jagatai. What would be the upshot if now, while their father was still alive, discord should prevail among his sons?

But no one marked Jenghiz' troubles. The feasting went on as usual; there was plenty of fun hunting the wild asses, finally lassoing those that were uninjured, branding them as the property of the Khakan, and turning them loose again. Meanwhile the trappers had discovered new game. A boar-hunt was to take place.

At this hunt, the incredible happened. Jenghiz Khan was pursuing a wounded boar, which suddenly turned and charged in blind wrath. Then, at the moment when Jenghiz was drawing his bow to inflict a deadly wound, he fell from his horse. He was lost.

But a miracle happened. The boar did not attempt to touch the Khakan. He stopped in mid charge, and stood as if rooted to the ground. When the other riders drew near, he turned and vanished in the undergrowth.

Jenghiz Khan was profoundly disturbed. He could not understand what had happened. How had it been possible for him to lose his seat? Of course his mount had naturally shied at the approach of the boar and had leaped to one side—but this had never yet unseated so knowledgeable a rider. What was even more incomprehensible was that the raging boar had stopped

short and refrained from goring him. Precisely when he lay on the ground defenceless.

Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai explained matters.

Heaven had warned him. The Emperor must not so rashly put his life in danger. Still, since Heaven did not wish his destruction, the boar had been made to turn back.

Jenghiz Khan said he would like to hear Ch'ang-Ch'un's opinion.

But the Taoist philosopher had no belief in a personal God who loved His children, sent them warnings, rewarded or punished. For Ch'ang-Ch'un all living creatures were like the sacrificial dogs made out of straw. When they were decked out for the sacrifice, they were put in a splendid shrine, dressed in costly raiment. The priest of the dead fasted and cleansed himself before coming to the sacrifice. But as soon as the sacrifice was over, these straw-dogs were cast into the mire, where the passers-by trod on them regardless—until at length the scavenger swept them up and burned them. If the time should be ripe for the advancement of an individual he finds the table of life spread and everything prepared for his use. But when his brief hour is over, he is thrown away and trampled into the dust. It was assuredly time for the Khakan to abandon such amusements as hunting.

Jenghiz Khan could not realise that at sixty-one he might already be too old for hunting. He still felt courageous and strong, and said, in reply to the Sage from China:

"It is hard to renounce anything which one has done all one's life."

Ch'ang-Ch'un said that he was not asking for renunciation, but for a higher insight:

"Winter is followed by spring; then comes in turn summer, autumn, and again winter. With the life of man it is different. In his case every day has within it the experiences of all previous days; but when the complete unfolding is over, he returns to his origin. The return to the origin signifies repose, and repose signifies that one's mission has been fulfilled, in accordance with

the decision of the eternal order. The knowledge of this is what we mean by illumination."

Jenghiz Khan grew thoughtful. After a pause, he rejoined:
"I have treasured your words in my heart."

In actual fact, he never again took part in a difficult hunt.

There now ensued between the Khakan and the Chinese philosopher a struggle of wills. Jenghiz wanted Ch'ang-Ch'un to stay with him as adviser. Ch'ang-Ch'un wanted to return to China. Jenghiz explained that he himself would be going home soon, and that as far as Mongolia they would travel the same road. To Ch'ang-Ch'un this march in the company of an army heavily laden with baggage seemed too tedious a prospect.

"I have discussed with Your Majesty all that you wished to know, and I have nothing more to say."

Jenghiz tried to put off the day of departure. Let the Sage only wait until he, Jenghiz, had found a suitable gift.

Ch'ang-Ch'un said he did not want any gift.

No special grace? No high dignity?

"Graces and high dignities are valueless. Favour and disfavour alike arouse anxiety. If one receives a favour, one is in dread of losing it. Then, when one has lost it, one suffers yet more anxiety."

Now Jenghiz thought of setting a trap for the philosopher:

"But still, you wish to influence others. Whether you do so by action or inaction—if you fall into disfavour, you will not be able to diffuse your doctrine."

A quiet smile played over Ch'ang-Ch'un's lips as he answered indifferently:

"When the man of noble mind happens upon a suitable time, he advances. If he does not happen upon it, then he goes his own way, and leaves the weeds to grow."

Jenghiz had nothing more to say. He provided Ch'ang-Ch'un with an escort which was instructed to convey him to China as comfortably as possible. But he would not be withheld from making a royal gift. One of the most beautiful sections of the Imperial Palace in Peking, with alluring parks and ponds, was

assigned to Ch'ang-Ch'un as his sphere of activity, with the proviso that there, after his death, a Taoist monastery should be established. Jenghiz Khan's successor fulfilled these instructions.

Ch'ang-Ch'un died in the same year and the same month as Jenghiz Khan.

CHAPTER XII

RETURN

I

JENGHIZ KHAN had now no reason for hurry. The leisurely homeward march of his army lasted a whole year. Innumerable prisoners, train after train of caravans laden with costly spoils, preceded him. The camps were more like those of a horde upon its annual migration than military encampments, for each warrior had several wives, and many of them little children; there were carts packed with the loot of the West; there were abundant herds. Slaves of both sexes and belonging to the same races as the young wives looked after the cattle, pitched the tents, and broke camp. This trek eastward was a folk-migration, but a tranquil and pleasurable one.

Two arrow-messengers from the distant Kin Empire arrived almost simultaneously. One of them brought sad tidings. The faithful Mukuli, who for eight years had been indefatigably at work in the subjugation of the Kin Empire, was dead. The last words of the Orlok, then fifty-four, uttered to his son Buru, were:

“For forty years I have made war, helping my ruler perform great deeds. Never have I grown weary of the task. There is only one thing I regret, that I have not yet succeeded in conquering the southern capital. That is left for you to do.”

The other messenger reported the death of Hsuan-tsung, the Kin Emperor, and the accession of his son Shu-hsu.

As usual when there was a change in the occupancy of the throne, the warlike activity of the Kin Dynasty flickered up, but even this did not make Jenghiz Khan hurry. He confirmed the position of Buru as Mukuli's successor, and continued his

slow progress from camp to camp, for he was waiting until his son Juji should arrive from the north and his two Orlok Sabutai and Jebei should join him from the west on their return after their lengthy campaign around the Caspian. The three years he had assigned them were over.

But Juji did not come; and of the Orlok only Sabutai appeared. Jebei Noyon—Prince Arrow—Jenghiz' faithful friend and companion, conqueror of Kara-Khitai and subjugator of the Pamirs, had fallen sick and had died after a short illness on the return journey from the west, just before reaching Turkestan. The army sent in command of Sabutai had also been greatly thinned before it returned; but the numerous heavily-laden waggon, the hosts of prisoners of hitherto unknown races and nations, signified that great deeds had been performed, and that the campaign had been crowned with success. A reconnoitring force of 30,000 men had marched through the domains of dozens of hostile peoples, and the European world had been opened to the Mongols.

II

Between the flats beside the Caspian, from which Sabutai and Jebei had started, and the stony rampart of the Caucasus, lay the Christian realm of Georgia. A ride across the mountain principality of Azerbaijan, an incursion into the wild country of Kurdistan, and then Sabutai began his invasion of Georgia with 30,000 men. The flower of the Georgian chivalry, proud and tried fighters, already armed for the Crusade, flung themselves against him. Sabutai took the offensive, flying the nine-tailed emblem with the white falcons on the wing, which by the Georgians, as subsequently by the peoples of Europe, was regarded as a distorted Christian symbol. A brief and violent battle ensued, and then the Mongols retreated, leading their pursuers directly into Jebei's ambush. Here Sabutai and his command rallied, and the Georgian army, attacked on both sides, was annihilated.

But, luckily for Georgia, Sabutai and Jebei gave their Mongols no time to study this new land. They pressed on over the South Caucasian foothills into the topmost passes of the range. The savage horsemen suddenly disappeared from the ken of western humanity, and Queen Russudan of Georgia was able to maintain that the fear of her knights had driven them away.

In the year 1222, precisely twelve months after the jubilant epistle of Jacques de Vitry, the second tidings of the Mongol reached Europe in a letter from Queen Russudan to the Pope:

"A savage people of Tartars, hellish of aspect, as voracious as wolves in their hunger for spoils and as brave as lions, have invaded my country. They must be of Christian origin, since they carry an oblique white cross on their banners. The brave knighthood of Georgia has hunted them out of the country, killing 25,000 of the invaders. But, alas, we are no longer in a position to take up the Cross as we had promised Your Holiness to do."

The most significant truth in this letter was that the Georgians were no longer in a position to join the Crusade.

The passage over the Caucasus was terrible. Just as when Jebei rode across the Pamirs his army had had to abandon its baggage, to destroy the catapults, the mangonels, and the other engines, since there was no possibility of dragging them over these barely practicable passes—so now. But when the Orlok at length came down the glaciers of the Caucasus between the precipitous dark rocks, to reach the gorges along which raging torrents led into the valley of the Terek, the Mongols found awaiting them (as they had found Mohammed awaiting them in the Fergana Valley) a powerful army of opponents.

All the fighting mountaineers of the Caucasus—the Cherkesses, the Lesginen, and the Alans—had assembled to defend their territories; and allied with them were the semi-nomads of the plains, the formidable Kumans, a savage and pugnacious people of the Kipchak region. The Kumans regarded the steppe-girdle from the Caspian Sea to the Danube as their own indisputable property; here they could range free and untrammelled; and they

had hastened to bar the exit from the mountains by which the invaders wanted to escape into the freedom of their fertile plains.

The Mongols were exhausted by their hardships. They fought savagely, murderously, against overwhelming odds, and the battle remained indecisive.

Next day Mongol envoys, bearing gold, precious stuffs, and leading with them splendid horses, entered the camp of the Kumans.

"We are men of the same stock as you, and you have united yourselves with alien races against your brothers. What have they given you? We can provide you with all that your heart can desire."

The Kumans detached themselves from their allies.

Sabutai attacked the mountaineers, dispersed them, destroyed their fortresses, and pressed their young men into the service of his own army. Then the Mongols pursued the Kumans, who were withdrawing, defeated one tribe after another, and took away the presents they had given them. When the Kumans were infuriated by this treachery, Sabutai pointed out to them that they themselves were traitors and deserved nothing better. As for Jebei, he told them that in any case they were rebels, since, as people of the Kipchak region, they belonged to Juji's fief.

The Kumans, it need hardly be said, had never heard anything of Juji and his fief; and perhaps had gleaned nothing more in commerce with the tribes eastward of the Caspian than that somewhere in the east there had appeared a sovereign in whose train they levied war; but the two Orlok showed a written authorisation from the "Sovereign of all Mankind" which was penned in an unknown script. He had presented the Kumans to his son Juji as subjects. Sabutai and Jebei had come to reduce them to obedience and punish them.

The speed with which the Mongols were able to move, their superior technique of warfare, their new and hitherto unknown weapons, the tidings that they spared neither man nor woman, and, superadded to this, the contention that they had only come to punish the Kumans, reduced these to panic. Being semi-

nomads, they had no flourishing cities to defend, and did not cling stubbornly to their few and scattered settlements. Their possessions (also the fruit of plunder) were quickly got together, laden upon horses, and, driven forward by the small Mongolian army, a human torrent poured westward and northward.

How far did Kipchak extend? Behind the human torrent, rode Sabutai and Jebei with their 30,000, pursuing their course westward, crossing the Don and riding along the northern shore of the Sea of Azov. This was a fertile country with magnificent steppes, rich pastures—a dainty morsel for nomads.

Now they reached a narrow isthmus stretching southward, and along this they rode into the Crimea, crossing mountains. On the southern coast of the peninsula was the Genoese fortress of Sudak. The Genoese did not know that the best way of approaching the Mongols was to offer them presents. They closed the gates and summoned the citizens to the walls. The fortress was stormed and set on fire, and the survivors escaped on long galleys to bring for the third time news of the strange and terrible people with the banner displaying an oblique cross. This news they bore to their distant home on the western side of Italy.

From Crimea the Orlok continued their raid to the west, crossing the Dnieper and reaching the Dniester. The mouth of this river marked the end of the Black Sea, but the steppes stretched on indefinitely. Here began mighty realms of white strangers. Northward lay the principalities of the Russians; north-westward a kingdom called Poland; westward, a kingdom called Hungary; southward was the Byzantine Empire.

Ten thousand families of the Kumans had fled across the Danube and had applied for protection to the Emperor of Byzantium. It was from the Georgians that this Emperor had first heard of the “devilish” strangers. Now, alarmed by the news from the north-east, with feverish haste he fortified his capital, and, gladdened by the accession of new warriors, settled the Kumans in Thrace and Asia Minor.

Other tribes had crossed the Prut and sought protection from the King of Hungary, to whom they subjected themselves.

Sabutai was not commissioned to make war on these foreign realms. His 30,000 riders were nothing more nor less than a force for reconnaissance. Here, on the shores of the Black Sea, ended Kipchak, and here he settled down in winter quarters with his Mongols to rest before returning, while he sent spies into the surrounding territories. For if the Khakan should later dispatch his armies to the west with instructions to ride to the end of the world, he must be informed concerning the countries through which they had to pass. Sabutai, therefore, set to work learning all he could about Europe.

So precise was the intelligence he was able to glean that Jenghiz Khan's successors were able, fifteen years later, to draw up a complete plan for the conquest of Europe in eighteen years, and, in the first six years of that time, under Sabutai's leadership, to subjugate Russia, Poland, Silesia, Hungary, Serbia, and Bulgaria, then, according to plan, advance to the Adriatic and close to the gates of Vienna, while the European princes were at their wits' end in face of this terrible incursion of strangers who were now attacking them for the second time.

III

To the north lay the Russian principalities.

Prince Mstislav of Halicz had married a daughter of the Kuman Khan Kotyan, in order to protect his territories from the robber campaigns of his dangerous neighbours. Now Kotyan, with the tribes under his command, fled to the Russian prince, bringing horses, oxen, and slaves of both sexes as gifts, and begging for help against this enemy who had so suddenly appeared "from unknown lands, speaking an unknown speech, but determined to enslave all the peoples."

Upon Mstislav's instigation, the Russian princes assembled at Kiev. Of old the Kumans had been their enemies. The Russian

territories had suffered severely from the predatory attacks of these savage neighbours; but now, when the Kumans implored help, it seemed expedient to make common cause with them against this unknown enemy and save the Russian principalities from becoming the seat of war. It would be better to face the enemy in the land of the Kumans than to wait until they themselves were attacked.

From Kiev, Kursk, and Smolensk, from Volhynia and Halicz, Russian armies set forth into the Black Sea district. The Dnieper and the Dniester were full of Russian galleys. The Slavs' fighting force grew from day to day, and the dispersed tribes of the Kumans joined their new allies.

A war against the Russians was no part of Sabutai's present plan. When their army marched along the lower reaches of the Dnieper, ten Mongolian envoys appeared in their camp:

"Why have the Russians taken to the field? The Mongolians have no quarrel with them. They have only come to chastise their disloyal vassals, the Kumans."

Sabutai was well informed, for he said: "The Kumans have frequently attacked Russian territories and plundered them. The Russians would be much better advised to make common cause with the Mongols and take vengeance on the Kumans."

The Russians naturally regarded this offer as nothing more than a ruse of war. The Mongols' only aim must be to break up the alliance. The Kumans had never been vassals of the Mongols. The ten envoys were therefore put to death, and the Russians crossed the Dnieper, to attack and disperse a Mongolian advance-guard of a thousand men.

To the murder of the envoys there could be only one answer: vengeance.

But first the Mongols taught their enemies a lesson in international good manners. Two men spurred into the Russian camp, and said:

"You have murdered our envoys, have attacked our outposts, and want war. So be it. We had planned no evil against you.

All the peoples have only one God, and He will judge between us."

So amazed were the Russians by this second embassy, and so astounded at the contempt for death with which the two Mongols had ridden into their camp simply to make an official declaration of war, that this time the envoys were allowed to depart unscathed.

For nine days Sabutai and Jebei kept in touch with the army of Russians, which was eager for a fight, and then the Mongols halted beside the River Kalka. Eighty thousand Russians and Kumans were opposed to a Mongolian force which scarcely amounted to a third of that number. Mstislav of Halicz, who had gained the victory over the advance-guard, now attacked, dreading lest the enemy should escape, and unwilling to run the risk of having to share the honour of victory with anyone else. Meanwhile Mstislav of Kiev was engaged in fortifying his position on the lofty banks of the river. The Mongols directed the whole strength of their counter-attack upon the Kumans, routed them by a fierce cavalry charge, and, driving the fugitives before them, pierced the already disordered ranks of the Russians. Hardly a tenth of the Russian army escaped slaughter. Mstislav of Halicz saved himself on one of the galleys and burned the rest, to make pursuit impossible.

Then the Mongols spent three days storming the camp of Mstislav of Kiev, and of the 10,000 soldiers from Kiev hardly one was left alive to take home news of the defeat. Six princes and seventy boyars paid for the murder of the envoys with their lives. Now in all South Russia no army was left to make headway against the Mongols.

Still, with three tumans Sabutai and Jebei could not hope to conquer Russia. Therefore, contrary to their usual custom, they did not push the pursuit, being content to plunder the nearest towns for vengeance. Then they rode northward as far as the frontier, where the South Russian steppes began to pass into the forests of the north. Thereafter they turned eastward with their troops.

Along the upper Volga and the Kama lay the realm of Bolgary—a mainly agricultural State, which carried on a vigorous trade in hides, beeswax, and honey. A Bulgarian army wanted to bar the strangers' progress. After their defeat, the Kama Bulgarians recognised the suzerainty of the Mongols, and their territory rounded off Juji's fief to the north-west.

Lower down the Volga lived certain tribes of the Saxin; agriculturists and fishermen. After the storm of their capital, they submitted to the Mongols.

IV

For weeks Jenghiz Khan continued to summon his Orlok Sabutai; and for weeks the latter had to entertain his sovereign with accounts of a raid unique in history when a force of 30,000 men rode such vast distances into the unknown. He had covered more than 4,000 miles since leaving the southern shores of the Caspian, had traversed immense territories, won a dozen battles, conquered a dozen peoples—and all to enlarge Juji's fief.

But Juji did not come to hear the report of the bold Orlok—the finest report to which Jenghiz Khan had ever listened. Five colours denoted the world: red, the south; black, the north; blue, the east; white, the west; and violet, the centre—and the tutelary spirit of the Kiut-Borjigin had accompanied the white standard with the flying falcon through every quarter of the world and had given his Mongols the victory over the peoples of all five colours.

Again and again Jenghiz Khan sent for Juji, saying that he must come. Here were lands to conquer far more important than Khwarizm proper, the little country beside the Sea of Aral. The whole West should obey him. But every time came back the same excuse: Juji is ill.

Then one day a Mongol from Kipchak appeared, saying he had seen Prince Juji out hunting.

Fierce was the anger of Jenghiz Khan. Two arrow-messengers

hastened to Jagatai and Ogatai. They must instantly set forth with their troops against Juji's horde. The return march of the whole army was delayed. Orders flew from tuman to tuman; the horsemen were mounted and ready to start.

The first civil war among the Mongols was imminent.

In vain did Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai try to restrain the Khakan; vainly did he describe the danger which such a breach would entail in the future.

Jenghiz Khan shouted:

"He is mad. Only a madman could dare to defy my commands. A madman shall not rule!"

The princes had already started on their ride north, and the army was beginning its campaign—when news came, brought by one of Juji's sons who had ridden hell for leather. Juji was dead.

He had not been out hunting, but only his generals, whom he did not wish to deprive of their amusement, while he himself lay in his tent mortally sick.

No one saw Jenghiz Khan mourn or complain. What he had demanded of Jagatai when he forbade his son to weep for Moatugan, was a demand he imposed upon himself.

For two days he remained alone in his tent. For two days he begged his dead son's pardon for the injustice done to him. Juji had not been disobedient or defiant. With the splendid gift of the dapple-grey horses and of the wild-asses he had tried to secure his father's forgiveness for inability to comply with that father's wishes.

When Jenghiz Khan emerged from his tent, he commanded that there should be brought to him the man who had declared Juji had been out hunting. But although the country was scoured for hundreds of miles, this man could not be discovered.

The Khakan asked no more about him. Weary and bent, after seven years he recrossed the country of the Uighurs, going this time eastward, into Mongolia.

And here, on the frontier between the two lands, he came across a merry hunting-party. His two youngest grandsons,

Tuli's children, the eleven-year-old Hulagu and the nine-year-old Kublai, had just killed their first game, and, swelling with pride, showed the spoils to their grandfather. Kublai had shot a hare, and Hulagu had actually brought down a stag.

In accordance with old custom, the thumbs of the boys must be rubbed with the flesh and the fat of the slaughtered game, the first victims of their bows, that they might become fortunate hunters; and Jenghiz Khan, now a trifle more cheerful, himself carried out the ceremony upon his grandchildren. Furtively Hulagu, the future ruler of Western Asia and founder of the dynasty of the Ilkhans, gripped his grandfather's hand so firmly that Jenghis laughingly exclaimed: "You see how my offspring overpower my hands." But Kublai, later the Great Khan under whom the Mongolian Empire attained its richest blossoming and whom the world obeyed from the Adriatic to the Pacific, remained so grave and dignified and stretched forth his hands so attentively that the Khakan turned to his sons saying: "If you are ever in doubt what to do, ask this boy Kublai."

CHAPTER XIII

JENGHIZ KHAN'S HERITAGE

I

ACCORDING to the Chinese chronicle Yuen-chao-pi-shi, Jenghiz Khan had himself informed every day at noon and in the evening that the Tangut Realm of Hsi-Hsia had not yet ceased to exist. He wished to be continually reminded of the oath he had sworn before setting out on the campaign against the Shah of Khwarizm—that, were it in his dying hour, he would make the Tangut ruler answer for treasonable desertion.

The actual monarch against whom Jenghiz Khan had sworn vengeance for refusing to fulfil the duties of a vassal no longer existed, having died in the same year as Mukuli and Hsuan-tsung. But his son and successor on the throne of Hsi-Hsia supported Chinese malcontents against the Mongols, and refused to send the Crown Prince to the Khakan's horde; he was assembling Chinese and Kara-Khitan refugees, and could place a mighty army in the field. The spies of the General Staff declared that this army numbered half a million.

Simultaneously with this re-establishment of strength in the realm of Hsi-Hsia, after Mukuli's death the old fighting spirit had reawakened in the Kin Empire. Covered on the northern flank by the Yellow River and protected to the west by a chain of fortresses established in well-nigh inaccessible mountains, it had rallied all its forces for a last desperate struggle. According to Chinese reports, in Kin and Hsi-Hsia during the fifteen years of war and civil war more than 18,000,000 persons—nearly a third of the population—had perished. Yet Kin was still in a position, not only to organise fresh resistance, but even to take the offensive. Its armies were stretching forward into the lost

provinces, where they defeated the Mongolian garrisons and those Chinese who had gone over to the side of the Mongols, re-occupying many of the towns which had been taken by Mukuli.

A coalition between Hsi-Hsia and Kin seemed imminent.

But at this juncture the aged Khakan once more quitted his tribal home beside the Onon for a new campaign towards the south and the east. It was in the middle of winter, at the head of an army of 180,000 men, that he set forth, accompanied by his sons and grandsons.

As a principle which was to guide all their subsequent actions, he said:

"When you have begun anything, you must, whatever happens, carry it through to a conclusion." They were to learn from the mistake he had made in prematurely breaking off the war against the Kin Empire. "You must never stop fighting until your enemy has been beaten to his knees."

As if aware that this was to be his last campaign, one from which he was unlikely to return alive, he had set his realm in order, allotted the hordes and the tumans, and specified his sons' fiefs.

Batu was to receive the fief of his father Juji, the domains northward and westward of the Altai Mountains—as far as the hoof of a Mongolian horse could travel.

Jagatai was given the land of the Uighurs and all that lay westward and southward of it; Kara-Khitai, and the Khwarizmian Empire southward of the Aral. To Ogatai he gave Hsi-Hsia, Kin, and the remaining conquered territories of Eastern Asia. For Tuli, his youngest son, who (according to ancient Mongolian custom) should be the guardian of the hearth, he left Mongolia and the greater part of the Mongolian army.

But this did not imply a partition of the realm. In the Yasak it was laid down that, for all time to come, the descendants of Jenghiz Khan, wherever they might be, were—after the ruler's death—to assemble in Mongolia at a kuriltai to choose one of themselves to be the Khan of Khans. This Great Khan was to be overlord, and any who should appoint a supreme ruler other

than him chosen by the kuriltai incurred the penalty of death. In this way Jenghiz Khan hoped to safeguard the unity of his realm and to preserve it from civil wars and the establishment of opposing monarchs. Always the worthiest and most capable must inherit the throne.

II

The fate of Hsi-Hsia was decided upon the ice-field formed by the frozen Yellow River. Jenghiz had occupied the hills surrounding one of the lakes in this river, and sent his best marksmen on foot to the attack across the ice-field. The Tangut cavalry were advancing like a whirlwind; but the horses began to slip and fall upon the ice, and at this juncture the Mongols flung themselves from every side upon the helpless riders, shooting, stabbing, and slashing them to death. Then, mounting their own horses, they rode round the lake to deal with the rapidly advancing Tangut infantry, whom they cut down. The Mongols are said to have erected three stakes upon the battlefield, and to each stake hung the corpse of a warrior head downwards. This signified that they had slain 300,000 of the foe.

Nothing, after this defeat, could save the towns and the people of Hsi-Hsia from fire and sword. No city of importance was left unsacked and unburned. The inhabitants hid themselves in caves, in mountain gorges, in the forests. No more than a small fraction escaped. While their fields were trampled, their habitations set on fire, and while their king perished in one of the mountain fortresses, his son Shidurgo, the third of the race to venture upon defiance to Jenghiz Khan, shut himself up in the capital Ninghsia, which the Mongols had already vainly besieged. Its walls were proof against the missiles of catapults; the bursting pots of lighted naphtha could not fire the stone towers, and the moats were too deep to fill. A long siege was imminent.

Jenghiz Khan appointed one-third of his army for the work of investment, sent another third headed by Ogatai to the Kin

Empire, dispatched a third army into the west of the Tangut realm, while he himself marched eastward across the whole territory to reach the mountains which marked the junction of three realms: Hsi-Hsia, Kin, and Sung.

Thus the possibility of communication between the Chinese and the Tanguts was prevented, and their courage sank.

An envoy from the Kin rulers approached Jenghiz to sue for peace, bringing a bowl of exquisite pearls from the imperial treasury as a gift.

Jenghiz Khan commanded that the pearls should be flung into the dust in front of his tent. Anyone who chose to stoop might pick them up. He had had enough of emperors and kings who came with gifts and sued for peace which they were determined to infringe.

No sooner had the Kin envoy been disposed of than another messenger, this time from Shidurgo, arrived bearing an offer to surrender the city of Ning-hsia.

"If the Khakan will grant me pardon, within a month I will pay him homage"—such was Shidurgo's message.

Jenghiz Khan sat motionless for a long time with an inscrutable expression before he answered:

"I will forget the past."

He felt very old. Distressing dreams troubled him. "The vigour of youth has been replaced by the weakness of old age." He would often say: "I am about to set out upon my last journey."

He sent for his sons and grandsons to assemble at this junction between the three realms, for he knew that the end was at hand.

"With Heaven's aid I have conquered for you a huge empire," he said to them. "From the middle of it a man may ride for a year eastward or westward without reaching its limits. But my life was too short to achieve the conquest of the world. That task is left for you. Be of one mind and one faith, that you may conquer your enemies and lead long and happy lives."

Then he told them the parable of the snake.

"There was once a serpent with one tail and many heads, and another serpent with one head and many tails. When a

cold winter came, they both had to seek a secure crevice as a retreat. For the many-headed serpent, every crevice was too narrow. The heads quarrelled with one another, until at length each had to find a hole for itself. The body had to remain outside, exposed to the cold, and with it all the heads perished. But the many-tailed serpent cuddled all its tails beneath its one head, and was thus able to withstand the frost." The old man's weary voice grew harsh as he continued. "Only one son must inherit my throne." He looked at them fixedly: "Which among you shall become head of my realm?"

His sons fell on their knees and begged him to issue his orders, which they would obey.

The veteran's glance rested for a long time upon the three sons who were kneeling before him, before he at length decided:

"In that case I appoint Ogatai to be my successor."

In making this choice, Jenghiz Khan was guided by the thought of the qualities which seemed to him most important for the ruler of his vast realm. Not one of his sons had his genius, his military skill, his iron will, his tenacity, and his knowledge of human nature—at least not one of them had, like himself, all these qualities combined. He must choose his successor in accordance with certain pre-eminent qualities. He therefore rejected Jagatai, despite the latter's iron will and severity; rejected Tuli, the youngest, though Tuli had energy and military skill; and appointed Ogatai to the throne, although Ogatai was so infirm of will that he had never been able to curb the vice of drunkenness which his father detested. But Ogatai was so shrewd that he knew how to listen to others and turn their capacities to account; so good-natured that he won the hearts of all who came into contact with him; and so clever in the management of men that he had been able to adjust the quarrels between Jagatai and Juji. Jenghiz Khan considered keen insight, kind-heartedness, and a knowledge of human nature more important than a strong will, military talent, and energy.

When he had announced his decision, he asked Ogatai to give an opinion concerning it.

Still kneeling, Ogatai replied: "O my ruler and father, you have commanded me to speak. I must not say that I will not take over the succession, and I shall endeavour to rule with zeal and wisdom. But I fear lest my children may lack the capacity to inherit the throne. That is all I can say."

"If the children and grandchildren of Ogatai are not sufficiently capable, at least one among my descendants will be found worthy to mount the throne," exclaimed Jenghiz Khan.

He was by no means inclined to establish a Great Khan Dynasty of the Ogatais any more than he intended, by this decision, to restrict the rights of the kuriltai as established in the Yasak. Until the choice of a successor had been confirmed by a Great Council, Tuli, the guardian of the hearth, was to act as Regent.

But now, when everything seemed settled and ordered, he was again seized by anxiety with regard to the possibility of dissensions among his offspring, of quarrels and disharmony. Once more he thought it necessary to show them that nothing but unity and combination could hold their empire together.

Seizing his quiver, he distributed the arrows among his children and grandchildren, and commanded each to break the arrow that had been allotted.

"Look, that is what will happen to you if you act in isolation; you will become the sport and prey of your enemies."

Then, taking the arrows from his reserve-quiver in a bundle, he made each of them try to break this bundle. When not one of them could succeed, he said:

"Thus firm will you be, if you all hold together. Believe no one, trust no enemy, help and support one another amid the dangers of life, obey the Yasak, and carry to an end any action you may begin. I have spoken. Now return to your armies."

He sent Ogatai back to China; Jagatai, to the west; Batu to the fief beyond the mountains.

But, down to the day of his death, the Khakan never ceased to be anxious about what the Kins might do. On his death-bed

he gave Tuli, who had stayed with him, a plan of campaign which was to be used for the complete destruction of these deadly enemies of the nomads:

"Their best soldiers are here in the west. Protected as the Kins are north, south, and west by the mountains and the Hoang-ho, they may seem invincible. But the Sung are the enemies of the Kins, and the Sung will allow our army to pass through their domains into the eastern lowlands. Thence we must make a direct onslaught on Kai-feng fu. Then the Kins will summon their best troops out of the west for the protection of the capital. When this army, after a march of 1,000 li, reaches Kai-feng fu the men and the horses will be so much exhausted that you should easily be able to destroy them."

Here upon his death-bed, on the 15th day of the middle autumn month of the Year of the Swine (August 18, 1227), he issued his last commands. His death was to be kept secret until Shidurgo arrived from Ning-hsia to pay homage. Then Shidurgo and all his companions were to be slain. True he had promised to pardon Shidurgo, but by that time he would be dead. Tuli would be Regent, and did not need to accept Shidurgo's homage. When Shidurgo had been killed, all the nobles and the Orlok were to return to their respective domains. Not until then was Jenghiz Khan's death to be announced to the world.

III

Chattering and laughing as usual, the Mongol armies were on their way back from the land of Hsi-hsia. Perhaps they were riding even more swiftly than usual, since they were cheerfully returning after a victorious campaign. Especially the divisions from the more distant fiefs, such as Kipchak, the Naiman country, the western mountains, and Liao-tung, seemed to be in a hurry, for the General Staff orders prescribed to each troop the precise distance to be covered day by day—as if this had not been a home-coming, but the start upon a new campaign. Besides,

many of the tuman commanders, and even the leaders of thousands, were serious of mien.

The imperial tent, in front of which of late a lance had stood with point in earth (the sign that the owner of the tent lay sick), was the last to be struck. No one except the princes, the Orlok, and Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai had the entry into this tent. The veteran body-guard surrounded it as with an iron ring by day and by night. Only once did the ring open, to give passage to Shidurgo and his train, who were carried forth as corpses.

But now the Mongols were striking camp, tent by tent. The nobles with their troops dispersed in all directions, until at last there only remained the thousand riders of Jenghiz Khan's Old Guard. In a thickly aggregated mass, through which no unprivileged glance could penetrate, they surrounded the cart in which the Emperor lay; and when they had departed, there was no one left alive in the whole neighbourhood.

On its way, this train of silence and death left nothing but death behind. All living creatures that were so unlucky as to be spied by these horsemen, whether man or beast, bird or snake, were ruthlessly hunted down and slaughtered. Thus did they convey the body of the Khakan over mountains and streams, through forests and across deserts. Once only was the deadly silence unceremoniously broken. That was when the wheels of the cart sank deep into the blue clay of the route, and even the strongest horses could not tear it from its place. Thereupon Zagan Noyon, the leader of the thousand, broke into song:

"O thou Lion of Mankind, wonderfully procreated by Eternal Heaven! O thou Teb-Tengri, my Ssutu-Bogdo Khan of Khans! Dost thou wish to leave the whole of thy great people in the lurch and remain alone here? Thy horde, thy subjects, the fertile people of the Mongols, thy princes and nobles—all are there, beside the Delugun-Boldok, where thou wast born. Thy noble spouse Bortei, betrothed to thee in early youth, thy lovely wife Katun, thy lutes and thy flutes, thy golden tent and thy throne—all, all are there. Hast thou, because the land here is warm, because so many of thy slain enemies lie in it, forgotten thine

own people of the Mongols? Even though we could not shield thy splendid life against the onslaught of death, we should still carry thy remains, which are as precious as the finest jade, to thy home, that thy consort Bortei may look upon them, as would be the wish of the whole of thy great people."

Thereupon, as if the deceased sovereign had graciously answered the petition, the cart once more was set in motion.

On the frontier of Mongolia this silent procession encountered another procession that was clamorous with mourning. The five wives with their children, the five hundred accessory wives and servant-maids of their ruler, the Orlok and the nobles, received the Mighty Dead, and, profoundly mourning, they conducted him with measured keening through his four hordes into Delugun-Boldok beside the source of the Onon, where the body was to lie in state.

Then those chosen for the purpose, accompanied by the men of the Old Guard, rode on to Mount Burkan-Kaldun, which twice had saved the life of young Temuchin. At the foot of the mountain they wanted to take the corpse out of the cart and bear it to the summit, but the body of the Khakan lay as if fixed upon the bier. They therefore lifted the whole cart and carried it upwards.

On the top of this mountain the Khakan had once, after a hunt, rested for a long time beneath a spreading tree. When his companions came to him, he said: "This place is fit for my last rest. Let it be noted."

Beneath this tree, therefore, they interred Jenghiz Khan, together with the cart in which he had made his last journey, and from which he did not wish to be separated. Eight white tents were pitched up there as shrines for reverence and prayer. The thousand riders of the Guard remained on honourable watch in front of the mountain, whose summit later was also the place of interment of Tuli and his two sons, the Great Khans Mangu and Kublai.

But around the giant tree, lonely at the time of the interment, saplings sprouted and grew, so that soon there was an impene-

trable forest on the hilltop, and none could find the grave-mound ever more.

• Many travellers have sought the burial-place of Jenghiz Khan. The mountain massif known as Delugun-Boldok is known, but no one can say which of the peaks is Burkan-Kaldun. When asked to point it out, the Mongols are silent.

Seven hundred years have passed since then, but we are told that Mongol tribes still make annual pilgrimage to the summit of the mountain where the remains of the greatest conqueror of the world were laid to rest. In the Imperial Museum at Peking, we are also given to understand, Jenghiz Khan's garment of coarse linen is preserved as a relic.

PART TWO

THE MONGOL EMPIRE

CHAPTER XIV

A GREAT PRIME MINISTER

I

JENGHIZ KHAN was dead, and the atmosphere was one of suspense throughout the world of Asia, whose balance had been so profoundly upset by the repercussions of his wars and conquests. It had suddenly lost its centre. So long as he lived, he had been himself the realm, the law, the government, the supreme command, the ultimate authority in matters of life and death. He had swept away immemorial frontiers, while his camps, wherever they might be, had become places of pilgrimage for kings and princes and peoples who, before his day, scarcely even suspected one another's existence. Now the man and the military camp had ceased to exist.

The danger of a sudden rising of the nations against the Mongols had been averted by Jenghiz Khan through his last command. His death was not to be made known until all the garrisons had reached their appointed places; until all the princes, Orloks, and leaders of the tumans were back in their fiefs and their hordes. But immense forces and tensions which he had awakened and fostered, and which were far from having reached their climax, were discharged in the hour of his death.

For forty years he had been compacting the nomadic races, forging them into a mighty weapon, and then leading them across the vast spaces of Asia in a campaign of victory unexampled in history, trampling mighty realms under the feet of his horses, and upon their ruins making the Mongols supreme over the world. The generation of those who were now to hold sway, men in the forties and fifties, could, since their earliest youth, remember nothing but victories, looting, conquests, and again

more victories and more conquests. A third generation, young men in the twenties and thirties, burned to show themselves worthy of their fathers; and a fourth generation was already on the way.

For thirty years in unbroken succession this Mongol people had conducted devastating campaigns, but it was by no means weakened, by no means bled white. It stood there mightier and more numerous than ever, for each victory, each conquest, had brought new wives and new children. Every man fallen in battle had left a dozen offspring or more. Jenghiz Khan's son Juji, his brother Kasar, had each of them forty children; one of his nephews had a hundred. During the reign of his grandson Kublai Khan, the number of their offspring had swelled to eight hundred. Three decades after Jenghiz Khan's death, his own descendants were reckoned at ten thousand. Since, moreover, it was always the most distinguished and boldest among the Mongols who acquired the largest number of women and the most beautiful, the ruling stock continued to improve. Armenian chroniclers of the thirteenth century bear witness to this change. At the time of the first Mongol invasion Kirako wrote: "Their aspect was hellish, intolerable, and cruel." Magakii says: "Their appearance was inhuman." But a few decades later, Bishop Orbelian described them as having: "a fine appearance."

According to the Mongols themselves: "When the Khakan mounted the throne, this people had neither food for their stomachs nor clothing for their bodies. It is wholly due to his labours and to his deeds that a poor nation has grown rich, and one which was few in numbers become strong and full of multitudes." But now they lacked the will which had guided them and held them together. If the suddenly released energies were not to be turned each against each other, they must regain a single driving energy and a single direction; and the Khakan who, all-knowing, regarded disintegration as the greatest of dangers, had left as a heritage to his sons the aim of world-conquest.

For this purpose he bequeathed to them, not only a strengthened people well skilled in warfare, not only a number of talented

commanders and strategists who had learned their business from him, but also one of the most noted statesmen of the day, a man fully competent to organise so titanic a realm—the Chinese sage and soothsayer Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai. Sprung from the Liao, who for two hundred years had ruled over Northern China, and then for a century had been leading officials of their conquerors the Kins, Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai was himself of Mongol stock, so that he had at one and the same time an instinctive knowledge of the Mongols and a capacity for feeling and thinking as a Chinese.

The organisation of Jenghiz Khan's realm depended upon the dominion of the victorious nomads over many of the civilised peoples (whom God Himself had given into the hands of the Mongols), that the Mongols might derive benefit from the labours of the conquered, who had been kept alive for this very purpose. Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai sprang from a long line of ancestors who had been immersed in the ancient lore of China. He could not, therefore, fail to recognise how casual and untenable this state of affairs might prove, since it was likely to end, either with the annihilation of all that was worth preserving, or else in the breaking of the nomadic yoke. A past master both in sociology and mathematics, a disciple of Confucius, a lover of the fine arts who, during Jenghiz' campaigns, had acquired as loot books, musical instruments, and rare medicaments—Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai was necessarily much concerned about the preservation of culture. Yet he had no reason to wish for the destruction of the Mongols. Twelve years spent (first as soothsayer and astrologer, then as adviser, and last as most intimate friend of the Khakan) had not passed over him without leaving traces. The overpowering personality of Jenghiz Khan, the Mongol ruler's vast conquests, the far-reaching plan of establishing a world-empire, had fired Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai's imagination.

China had so often been conquered by foreign warrior-tribes. Had not these barbarians, time and again, within a few generations been absorbed by Chinese culture and Chinese customs, becoming Chinese in their whole nature? Now the Mongols had seized power. Well, they possessed sterling qualities fitting them

for rule. Their elemental energies might create a realm greater than any that had yet existed on earth; and yet it would still be the Middle Kingdom. Appointed by destiny as leader in this task, it was incumbent on Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai to bestow upon the Mongol empire the culture and organisation of Old China, and to bring into being an ordered State in which conquerors and conquered could live harmoniously together.

During the last years of Jenghiz Khan's life that ruler's decisions, except as concerned purely military matters, had been mainly the decisions of Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai; and Tuli, whose business as Regent was merely to hold the dominion together until the kuriltai had elected a new Khakan, gave his elderly prime minister a free hand.

To gain time for the most urgent measures, Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai's first order was that there should be two years' mourning. When, after this period, the sons, brothers, and grandsons of the Mighty Dead assembled to elect his successor, a centre of the realm was already in being—Karakorum. This was not a settlement consisting of felt tents, but a fixed town built during the campaign in Western Asia, amid the unloading place of the caravans. It was still Mongolia, close to the tribal home of the Kiut-Borjigin. Here there now rose a splendid imperial palace; here were all the necessary government buildings; here were treasure-houses, magazines for the storage of every conceivable ware. Around, stretched the boundless steppe where the imperial stud-farms were installed, the herds of cattle, and the flocks of sheep grazed. Even though in the middle of the arid land nothing worthy the name of town could be conjured up, there was all the more space for the tent-camps of the Jenghizides and their retainers coming from all quarters of the world.

The kuriltai could begin.

But Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai had made one mistake. Two years' delay proved too long. The princes, during this period, had grown accustomed to ruling their fiefs as independent sovereigns. Tuli did not try to interfere in their affairs, while they showed not the slightest desire to elect any other Great Khan than him. He was

a good army-commander, would certainly continue the period of victorious wars and conquests—and, for the rest, they would remain the independent masters of their several territories.

Two years after Jenghiz Khan's death the conditions which had prevailed before his appearance in Mongolia threatened to return; the vast country seemed likely to split up into a number of independent principalities, with the only difference that these fiefs would now extend over half of Asia.

But Tuli was the youngest of the sons, and custom among the Mongols proscribed him from holding sway, and they were too much afraid of Jagatai, the eldest (except for Juji, who was dead), to wish him in the saddle. As for Ogatai, directly he noticed that the princes had no inclination to appoint him Great Khan, he declared that he had no desire to issue orders to his uncle and his brothers.

The festivities lasted forty days before the election took place. Then came the four days of the election. On the first day the nobles appeared clad in white, the colour of the West; on the second day, they were dressed in red, the colour of the South; on the third day, in blue, the symbol of the East; and on the fourth day, when homage would finally have to be sworn, they wore brocade robes on which the colours of all four quarters of the heavens were embroidered.

But still they were not able to come to an agreement.

Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai, however, determined that no other than Ogatai should become Great Khan. To succeed in his plans he needed a ruler who was of a different calibre from the harsh and cruel Jagatai or from Tuli who thought only of wars and conquests. Ogatai was clever, was accessible to reasonable considerations, was pliable.

By referring to Jenghiz Khan's last wishes, Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai won over Tuli on behalf of the choice of Ogatai; but, aware of the general uncertainty, Tuli now declared:

"All is not yet ready. Should we not postpone the election to another day?"

"After this day, no other will be more favourable," answered

Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai gloomily. Then, with sudden resolution, he stepped up close to Ogatai and called to Jagatai: "You are the eldest, but you too are a subject. Prostrate yourself before Ogatai and pay homage to him. Such were the commands of Jenghiz Khan."

The appeal to the memory of Jenghiz Khan had due effect.

Without a word, Jagatai bared his head, loosened his girdle, hung it around his neck as a sign of humility, and kneeled before his brother. Following his example, all the other princes and Orlok prostrated themselves before Ogatai and paid him homage.

II

Among the envoys at Ogatai's coronation was one from the Kin Empire. He wished to convey congratulations and hand over the gifts of his ruler. Ogatai rejected both the one and the other.

"What do these gifts signify? Your ruler has delayed too long in announcing his subordination. My father grew old and died in war against the Kin. I cannot forget that."

Jenghiz Khan's heritage, which was a demand for the completion of world-conquest, had imposed upon his sons the prompt performance of three great tasks: the definitive subjugation of the Kin Empire; the completion of the conquest of Western Asia; and the subjugation of Europe. But although Jelal ed-Din had reappeared in Afghanistan and Persia and had already made himself master of considerable portions of the late Shah Mohammed's realm and although the Kama-Bolgars and the Saxin had once more declared themselves independent and had refused to pay tribute, the kuriltai decided that the first and most urgent business was war against the Kins.

Two generals, Charmagan and Baichu, were sent to Khwarizm at the head of 30,000 men, and three additional tumans were sent to the Volga. All the other armies were to make for the Kin Empire. Thereupon the generals in the provinces that had already been conquered declared that these could by no means be regarded

as bases of supply, since the storehouses were empty, the peasants had neither cattle nor other food, and the towns had been denuded of silk and other textiles. Annoyed by these unexpected difficulties, someone recommended that this useless people should be exterminated and their towns razed to the ground. Then, within a few years, the land would at any rate provide admirable pasture.

The proposal gained adherents, and the kuriltai was about to decide upon the complete extermination of the Chinese, when Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai begged leave to speak.

Everything was now at stake: the preservation of the towns and the civilisation of his original home; dozens of millions of Chinese lives; his whole plan for a realm in which there should be place for conquerors and conquered, for both culture and a military spirit. He did not waste time talking about such things as morality or humanity. He contented himself with a seemingly cold calculation (going into every detail) of what was taxable in Kin. Assessing the taxes in accordance with what he conceived possible, he came to the conclusion that the Chinese would be able to pay annually 500,000 ounces of silver, 80,000 pieces of silk, and 400,000 sacks of grain. These could be handed over to the State treasury. He went on to say:

"How could you describe as useless persons who can make such large contributions to the State?"

"Why, then, did they not deliver these goods?" asked Ogatai, impressed by the figures. "Why are the fields bare and the barns empty?"

"Because, although a kingdom can be conquered from horseback, it cannot be ruled from the saddle." Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai went on to repeat the words he had said to Jenghiz Khan before the expedition to Khwarizm: "One who wishes to make bows needs a handicraftsman who understands this art; and one who sets out to conquer realms cannot dispense with the handicraftsman who understands the art of government."

"Who hinders you?" asked Ogatai.

Therewith Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai's victory was assured. Ogatai set forth to make war against the Kins, leaving the work of govern-

ment to his prime minister, who could now set himself to the task of organising the whole country.

His first step was to command a strict separation between military and civil affairs. Then he sent learned men through all the provinces to hold public examinations for the selection of suitable officials. No one, not even a prisoner or a slave, was to be excluded from these examinations. By these means he set at liberty more than four thousand learned men who had been enslaved; restored them to their families, and made them judges and executive officials to take charge of the provinces. He freed the population from the arbitrary rule of local governors, established a definite order of precedence among army officers and civil officials, delimiting the powers of each, ordained capital punishment for embezzlement of public funds or a wasteful use of these, and saw to it that every offence against the laws should be judged by a proper court. To the traditional practice of kidnapping, Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai put an end by taking a census, not of males only but of families, in which every member of the family was recorded. He established a supreme court of justice, founded schools in which the children of the Mongols could be taught (after the Chinese manner) geography, history, mathematics, and astronomy; instituted a fixed system of weights and measures throughout the realm; forbade requisitions. There was a general increase in public security. The previous extortions of tax-gatherers were stopped by the regular imposition of moderate taxes, which the Chinese had to pay in money, textiles, or grain, the nomads in cattle. Paper money, a moderate amount of which he put into circulation, became the most highly coveted form of currency, being exchangeable for goods throughout the whole gigantic realm, in the towns of Persia, in the Central Asiatic mountains, and accepted at its face value by the merchants of China. The people began to breathe freely, the peasants set to work on the cultivation of the land, trade and industry revived.

But with these measures, Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai imposed restrictions upon the powers of the Mongolian governors and commandants, and deprived them of their opportunities for plundering the

people. He raised up powerful enemies against himself among the Mongols, was accused of treason and of favouring the Chinese.

However, when Ogatai came back from the war, Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai showed his master well-filled treasuries, granaries bursting with sacks of grain, and gigantic herds. He had established a regular postal service between the Kin Empire and Karakorum, with thirty-seven posting-stations, this being the model for a network of roads which, some decades later, spread throughout the empire, facilitating contact between the culture of the East and the culture of the West, and arousing the admiration of Marco Polo. Daily along this road from all parts of the Kin realm there arrived five hundred waggons laden with the necessities of life, beverages, and valuables of all kinds.

"How have you managed, without stirring from your place, to heap up so many treasures?" enquired Ogatai in genuine astonishment, and he asked Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai to pass judgment himself upon those who had accused him of treason.

But the thought of vengeance never occurred to the sage of China.

"We have too much else to do," he said. "When there is nothing more important on hand, we will occupy ourselves with such persons."

Ogatai felt satisfied, for, being himself a kind-hearted man, he was inclined to find an excuse for nearly every crime.

For instance, once when he was riding with Jagatai, who, as chief guardian of the Yasak, had to see to it that its stipulations were strictly observed, they surprised a Moslem who, in a rivulet, was making the ablutions prescribed by the Koran. Since the Yasak forbade anyone to wash in running water, Jagatai wished to have the man immediately put to death.

But Ogatai commanded that he should be placed under arrest, and not judged until the following day. During the night, he sent a message to the offender advising him to plead, when brought up before the court, that he had dropped a piece of gold which comprised all his property into the stream, and had been trying to retrieve it.

The court ordered a search to be made, and actually, at the point where the offender had been washing, a piece of gold was found—for Ogatai, before riding on, had furtively flung this into the stream. Now the Great Khan passed judgment that, in every such case, the law must be followed in future, but since the man was so poor that he would risk his life for a mere trifle he was to be given ten additional gold pieces, and then he would have no further need to break the commandments of the *Yasak*.

Magnanimous and free-handed to the point of extravagance, Ogatai himself was utterly indifferent to money. He was fond of listening to stories about ancient rulers and their lives, and when he heard of such as had loved to heap up valuables, he said:

"That was quite unreasonable, since no amount of wealth can save us from death, and we cannot take it with us into another life. We must store up treasures in the hearts of our subjects." He therefore missed no chance of bestowing gifts, and his followers complained that he did so without any proper selection.

"You are my enemies," he angrily exclaimed. "You want to prevent my gathering the only wealth which is lasting in this world, namely a good standing in the memory of men. Of what use to me is all this money, which gives me great trouble to guard it against thieves?"

His lavishness went so far that traders who came to Karakorum to dispose of their wares were always given ten per cent more than they had demanded. The merchandise was then distributed among his followers. To his treasurers he said:

"These persons have made the long journey hither hoping for profit. They shall not be disappointed if they come to me." Then, with a shrewd smile, he would add: "Besides, won't they find it advisable to make you little presents?"

When Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai wanted to have a law passed forbidding officials to accept gifts, Ogatai refused to sanction it, saying:

"No one has a right to ask for gifts, but he may accept them if offered."

Vainly did the prime minister try to convince his master that

in this case people would long for them without going so far as to demand them. He had to give way.

Once Ogatai's good-nature actually endangered the unity of his realm. During the kuriltai held after the conquest of the Kin Empire, the princes and princesses urged him to give them the various provinces as presents. He was about to agree, when Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai intervened, saying:

"Give them whatever you like, as long as you don't give them territories."

"What am I to do, then?" asked Ogatai. "I have already promised them what they asked."

"At least," replied Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai, "decree that they must ask no more from the territories than your officials collect in taxes."

Thus the Mongolian princes secured the income and titles of the various provinces, but without any right of making private exactions. Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai had put a check to the growth of a feudal nobility.

His intervention brought him many new enemies, but the Great Khan loyally supported his prime minister. He himself poured out a goblet of wine for Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai, and made a speech saying that the welfare of the realm was due to the prime minister's wise counsels. Turning to the foreign envoys, he asked with pride whether, in their countries, there was a man to compare with Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai for virtue and wisdom.

Then he openly admitted that he himself was a toper, but vowed amendment and his determination to follow Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai's advice. Thenceforward he would drink no more than half of his previous allowance of wine. He kept his word, as regards the number of goblets, but soon the goblets were twice as large!

However, the work was carried out, and the realm was consolidated. The Mongolian princes in their fiefs ruled no otherwise than the princes of the vassal countries. They were governors by the grace of the Great Khan. So highly was he esteemed and so strict were the laws of the Yasak, that Jagatai, having, at a carouse, challenged Ogatai to a race and won, felt remorseful. Next day,

attended by all his officers, he appeared in front of his brother's tent to ask for judgment to be passed on himself, since by his challenge, and by winning, he had failed of the necessary respect for the ruler. He wanted to be punished, and would accept any punishment, though it should be the bastinado or death. Touched by this exaggerated subordination on the part of an elder brother, Ogatai gently reproached him, but Jagatai would only accept pardon when all the formalities proper to clemency shown towards criminals had been fulfilled. He flung himself to the ground before the entry to the imperial tent, made the monarch a penitential gift of nine times nine racehorses, and asked the judges to make open proclamation of this, that everyone might know how the Great Khan had granted his brother Jagatai a life that was forfeit.

III

For four years a fierce struggle had been taking place for the southern provinces of the Kin Empire. Again and again the country hewed new armies out of the ground; again and again able generals were forthcoming who could not only hold their own against the Mongols but were frequently victorious. Not until, in strict accord with the plan of campaign divulged by Jenghiz Khan to his sons before his death, a Mongolian army under Tuli's command made its way eastward through the Sung territories, and attacked the Kins on two sides at once, was their fate decided.

Then Tuli died, and Sabutai took over the command.

In collaboration with the Sung armies he invested Kai-feng-fu. For a whole year this town with a population of 2,000,000 defended itself with desperate courage. Then Sabutai reported to Ogatai that the surrender would take place within a few days, and that, true to Jenghiz Khan's rule that anyone who resisted should be destroyed, he intended to raze the "Southern Capital" to the ground and put the inhabitants to the sword.

Once more Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai ventured to exert his influence against this proposal.

"For twenty years we have been fighting for this country, and the wealth of a country is its people. For a whole year we have been fighting for this town, and now will you allow it to be destroyed? Bethink yourself what riches, what values, will thus be annihilated!"

This time, however, Ogatai hesitated. What his prime minister demanded of him was an infringement of Jenghiz Khan's orders.

Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai found it necessary to bring up new reasons day after day.

"As soon as the town falls, all its inhabitants will become your subjects. Why, then, should you slay them? Among them are the ablest handicraftsmen, the best artists of the country. Will you have them put to death? Will you despoil yourself of the best of your possessions?"

In the end Ogatai gave way.

If we reckon the importance of a statesman by the number of human lives he saves from destruction, Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai was certainly one of the greatest statesmen the world has ever known.

By his intervention there were not only more than one and a half million deaths averted, but an end was speedily put to the war. The still unsubjugated provinces, which otherwise, in accordance with the war usages of the Mongols, had nothing to expect but rapine and murder, seeing that the capital had been spared, recognised that they had a chance of safety, and ceased to resist. The last emperor of the Kin Dynasty killed himself.

After four-and-twenty years of warfare, the whole Kin realm came under Mongol rule.

As Jenghiz Khan after the campaign against Khwarizmia, so now did Ogatai summon a kuriltai of victory. For a whole month, no word was to be said about business, and in the steppe palace of Karakorum there was feasting and carousing. Thereafter a new plan of conquest was conceived, which involved the waging of no less than four wars.

While the festivities were still in progress, news came from Ho-nan the southernmost of the Kin provinces to the effect that the Sungs, who had hitherto been Jenghiz' allies, were discontented

because the whole province had not been assigned to them. They had now set their armies in motion, and had taken a number of towns. An army was therefore mobilised against the Sungs. The Chinese chronicler reports: "The Mongols sent envoys to the Emperor to ask him: 'Why did you break your pledge?' Since then there have been no more quiet days on the farther side of the Yellow River."

A second Mongol army was dispatched eastward, to Korea, to repress the risings which had broken out there and to subjugate the country anew.

A third army of 30,000 Mongol riders went far westward across the Khwarizmian realm to Persia and beyond, for the subjugation of Asia Minor.

As a fourth enterprise, to be simultaneously conducted, it was decided to conquer Europe. The Mongols had already ridden hither and thither through the vast spaces of Asia, whose civilisations had been examined and whose peoples had been brought under the Mongol yoke. Europe was still an unknown and alluring possibility, and the upshot was that in the year 1236, between the Ural Mountains and the Sea of Aral, there assembled an army comprising the flower of the Mongolian youth, all those who were eager for conquests and warlike renown.

With this army marched most of the princes of the blood of Jenghiz Khan: Ogatai's two sons Kuyuk and Kadan; his grandson Kaidu; Tuli's son Mangu; a son and a grandson of Jagatai; and all the male offspring of Juji. Since, by the terms of Jenghiz Khan's testament, the subjugated lands and those to be subjugated in the extreme west were part of the fief of Juji, his son and successor Batu was nominally in supreme command of the 150,000 riders; but the real leader of the campaign was Jenghiz Khan's most famous commander, old Sabutai, the invincible, the great Orlok who had hunted the Shah to death and had then ridden to the farthest limits of the Kipchak steppes. The plan of campaign he drew up in the heart of Asia contemplated a war of eighteen years for the conquest of Europe.

CHAPTER XV

THE MONGOLS IN EUROPE

I

SIXTEEN years had passed since Jacques de Vitry had penned his jubilant epistles about "King David"; and ten since the death of Jenghiz Khan. Europe had been profoundly disappointed by the outcome of the Crusades. The power of Egypt had sufficed to frustrate the re-conquest of Jerusalem. In a counter-thrust, Islam had regained Anatolia. Instead of listening to the Pope's appeal for new crusades, people regarded it as more expedient to make terms with the powerful Moham-medans. The Italian city States, which fringed the Mediterranean with their settlements, were at odds with one another in competition for the lucrative spice-trade from the Levant. Emperor Frederick of Hohenstaufen was conducting friendly negotiations with the Sultan of Egypt, was able by treaty to secure the re-opening of Jerusalem to the Christians, exchanged gifts with the Bey of Tunis, and actually took into his service an army of Moslem mercenaries—using them to intimidate the Pope.

Thus the energies unleashed by contact with the East, finding no vent outside Europe, were raging within. There was not a country in which disputes between the feudal authorities and the monarchy were not in progress. But these minor disputes were put into the shade by the fierce struggle for supreme power between the Papacy and the Empire. Even as he had preached a crusade against the heathen, so the Pope now preached a crusade against the Emperor, and Frederick once more crossed the Alps into Italy at the head of an army of 100,000 men. With a force of 60,000, the North Italian city republics tried to hinder his passage over the Oglio, but, on November 27, 1237, they were

decisively beaten at Cortenuova, and the Emperor already believed himself on the point of gaining a victory over the Pope. Throughout the winter and the spring he held brilliant courts in Pavia, Turin, and Verona, receiving embassies from all parts of the West. New bodies of knights were continually arising to reinforce him, and there was talk of French and English auxiliaries. Even from the East, from Sultan Kamil, came congratulations upon his victory. So far had the fame of Frederick spread that an embassy actually arrived from countries hardly known to Europe by name, countries which lay on the farther side of the realm of the Seljuks.

This embassy, however, did not come to congratulate the Emperor. It came from the Moslem princes, beseeching aid against "those terrible barbarians" who were invading their land from the East, "destroying everywhere and laying waste." These were the three Mongol tumans which Ogatai had sent for the conquest of Persia (Irak Adjemi) and Asia Minor.

Still, however flattering this appeal for aid might be to Frederick as an indication of his increasing prestige, it was not likely to secure a favourable response even at a court so free from prejudice as was his. The history of the last two centuries had mainly to tell of the struggle between Christianity and Mohammedanism, and the idea of giving the Saracens assistance against their enemies was more than any European could stomach. Vainly did the Moslem envoys assure the Emperor that "unless the Saracens can stay the invasion of the barbarians, nothing can prevent the latter destroying the European world as well." The notion seemed too paradoxical, that Moslems should pose as defenders of Christian Europe!

The disappointed ambassadors made approaches yet farther west, at the courts of Louis IX of France and Henry III of England. They were given a courteous reception, but no one dreamed seriously of an alliance with the Saracens; no one could imagine that barbarian horsemen from Asia beyond the regions where the Moslems held sway could possibly be a danger to the Christian world.

Yet hardly had the Saracen envoys quitted the French and English courts, while Frederick, still in northern Italy, was preparing to resume his campaign against the Lombards, than terrible news came from distant Russia about conquered armies, burning cities, razed fortresses, violated women, massacred old men and children.

Perhaps the memory was not yet extinct of similar atrocities perpetrated fifteen years earlier. Then the story ran that savage riders had spurred northward over the Caucasus, defeating the South Russian princes. This time the foe hailed directly from the East and were laying waste Northern Russia. Who could believe that there was any connexion between the barbarians of whom the Saracens talked and the savage horsemen that were ravaging the Russian forests? Anyhow, the Russians were heretics, and this visitation could be regarded as Heaven's punishment for their sins. The earlier riders, those who had crossed the passes of the Caucasus, had speedily vanished without leaving a trace. These ruthless invaders, too, when they had murdered and plundered to satiety, would depart to their unknown homeland.

In very truth, by the spring of the year 1238, tidings came that they had faced about and disappeared into the endless steppes of the East. The Swedes, the Teutonic Knights, and the Lithuanians promptly took up arms—not in order to support the Russians in case of a new onslaught, but hoping that, after this devastating invasion, Russia would prove an easy prey. The savage horsemen? Western Europe did not take the danger seriously.

No one knew that the aim of the riders was to spread death and destruction in the West, nor had anyone in Europe grasped the amazing strategic skill with which they had conducted their enterprises during a winter campaign.

As early as the winter of 1236-1237, when the Mongolian army was being got together, Sabutai sent his warriors to subjugate all the peoples eastward of the Volga between the Kama and the Caspian, destroying their towns, slaying their men or taking them prisoner. Throughout the summer, the prisoners were drilled, taught to fight in Mongolian fashion, and in December

1237 the Mongol army, swollen by these new adherents to twice its previous strength, crossed the Volga on the ice.

The rich steppes of South Russia were naturally a great attraction to the nomads, and this might seem the easiest path for the invasion of Western Europe. But Sabutai, whose generalship was masterly, decided otherwise. Should he, coming from the East, invade these southern steppes, the South Russian princes could withdraw into the afforested areas of the north, trackless wilds which might form an insuperable obstacle to an army of cavalrymen. There the Russians could quietly await reinforcements from the north, and then fall upon the flank and the rear of the Mongols, as soon as these should advance farther west. Sabutai, therefore, led the Mongolian armies north-westward into the forest regions, determined to begin by breaking the power of the North Russian princes.

Envoys were sent in advance of the troops. They demanded from the Russian princes a recognition of Mongolian supremacy. The towns were to be opened to the invaders; a tenth of all property was to be handed over; and a tenth part of the population was to be surrendered for slavery or for military service—since it was the usual Mongolian tactics to take fortresses and overcome other obstacles with the aid of auxiliary troops drawn from the enemy by preliminary conquest, and themselves only to take part in the fighting at the decisive moment.

The Russians, who for centuries had been continually at war with the nomads of the steppes, knew them to be dangerous in open fight, but believed the riders powerless when faced by fortresses. These demands of the foe must be the outcome of craft and arrogance. The envoys were driven back or murdered. The princes shut themselves within their cities, and called the burghers to arms.

After six days' siege, the Mongols took Ryazan, surrounded the strong principality of Vladimir, easily occupied Moscow (then a place of trifling importance), proceeded to invade Vladimir from both sides, storming the capital in four days, and then attacking and annihilating the army of the princes which had

meanwhile concentrated somewhat farther to the north. During the month of February several strongly fortified cities fell into their hands. By the end of March, the North Russian principalities had ceased to exist. Batu was little more than a hundred miles from Novgorod, the cradle of Russia and its last bulwark. Then, though unconquered, and with no enemy worth mentioning to face, after having ridden thousands of miles, he renounced the plundering of the richest town in the country and, with his whole army, turned southward into the steppes. Sabutai was better acquainted with the Russian climate and Russian conditions than Napoleon proved to be six hundred years later. He had begun his campaign in mid-winter, despite the intensity of the cold; he had hounded his men onward across the snow through these vast expanses; but he now led men and horses intact into the steppes, before the melting of the snows should transform the North Russian plains into an impenetrable morass.

II

Here, in the southern steppes, horses and riders were to seek refreshment, and regain energies for a new advance; but the old hereditary trouble of the Mongolians, dissension, which was ultimately to destroy the greatest and most powerful realm that had ever existed in the world, was already at work among the descendants of Jenghiz Khan. In the Chinese Imperial Chronicle has been preserved a letter from Batu to Ogatai the Great Khan, which enables us to draw conclusions as to the origin of the most important developments of Mongolian policy during the next two decades. Batu wrote:

“By the favour of Heaven and good fortune, O Emperor, my uncle, the eleven nations have been subjugated. When the armies effected their junction, we held festival, and all the princes were present. As eldest, I drank one or two goblets of wine before the others. Buri and Kuyuk were unreasonable, left the feast, and mounted their horses, while abusing me. Buri said: ‘Batu does

not hold authority over us. Why did he drink before me? He is only an old woman with a beard. With one kick I could overthrow him and could stamp upon him.' Kuyuk screamed: 'I shall issue orders that he is to be beaten with a cudgel.' Others said: 'Batu ought to have a wooden tail tied to his behind as a disgrace.' Such was the language used by the princes when, after the war, we had come together with various peoples to discuss important matters. We had to break off the conference before these matters had been considered. That is what I have to report to you, O Emperor, my uncle."

The messengers sped swiftly into Mongolia from the Volga. In the centre of the dispute was Kuyuk. As Ogatai's eldest son he regarded himself as of more importance than the other princes. He was mortified that Batu, not he, should be in supreme command, and should issue orders to him. Since he was of an unyielding disposition, and would pay no heed to exhortation or reproof, Ogatai at length commanded him to return to Karakorum.

Meanwhile, two years had elapsed since the North Russian campaign. In Russia the inhabitants were already becoming accustomed to the presence of a new people in the steppes eastward of the Don—a people of whom little was heard except when refugees belonging to other nomadic tribes came to report having been driven out by the invaders.

Only one man recognised the extent of the danger. This was Kotyan, Khan of the Kumans, now an old man, who had survived the first onslaught of the Mongols, when Sabutai made a reconnaissance for Jenghiz Khan. In those days, Kotyan had fought on the side of the Russians. Directly he heard that the Mongols had established themselves in the steppe-girdle, he assembled his tribes, which, with their herds, had occupied the fertile regions northward of the Black Sea, and fled westward, with all his warriors, their wives and children, their tents and their tilt-carts. Having crossed both the Dnieper and the Dniester, he hastened through Bessarabia and Galicia as far as the Carpathians. Even here he did not feel safe, so he sent an embassy over the mountains to King Bela of Hungary, offering to subject himself to that

monarch. He was even ready to accept conversion to Catholicism for himself and his whole people, begging only for welcome and safeguard.

Kotyan's offer signified the conversion of 200,000 heathen, and the Catholic priesthood of Hungary was strongly in its favour. Besides, Kotyan had 40,000 warriors, who would pay homage, not to the territorial magnates, but to the king alone, and this would betoken a strengthening of the royal power. Since Bela, like almost all the rulers of that day, was in perpetual feud with the territorial nobility, he gladly accepted the offer. The baptism of the Kumans was solemnly begun, the king and the nobles becoming godfathers of Kotyan and the chieftains. Then the nomads, with tents, carts, and cattle, entered the rich Hungarian plain.

But tribesmen who were used to the freedom of the boundless steppes found it hard to adapt themselves to the new conditions. Everywhere the ground was tilled; everywhere crops had long since been planted. The cattle of the nomads trod the growing grain into the ground. On all hands the newcomers were at odds with the settled population, for, as the chroniclers declare: "The Kumans violated the wives of the peasants, while the Hungarians found the Kuman women little to their taste." The nobles, seeing that increase of the royal power meant a diminution of their own, fanned the flames of hatred against the new subjects of King Bela, until the monarch agreed that the Kumans should be classified by tribes, each of which was to be allowed access to no more than a specific area.

Hardly had matters been to some extent settled in this way, than a Mongolian embassy reached Hungary.

In accordance with the Mongolian custom of sending ambassadors sprung from those with whom they wanted to treat, the envoy this time was a European, and indeed an Englishman. The chroniclers tell that he was a man who had had to flee from his native land on account of some offence, and who, after various adventures, had found his way to Central Asia and had entered the service of the Mongols. Now, in their name, he demanded

the surrender of the Kumans who were "thralls of the Mongols", and he alleged grievances on account of the murder of previous envoys. (It was a fact that the Hungarians had killed several Mongols whom they held to be spies.) He went on to ask King Bela no more and no less than the recognition of the suzerainty of the Mongolian ruler, the Khakan, "to whom Heaven has given all the lands of the earth as his property."

Vainly did this Englishman use his oratorical arts; vainly did he adjure the king and the councillors to comply with the demands of the Mongols and to send them presents which they could regard as tribute; vainly did he declare that a refusal would inevitably lead to invasion with all its accompanying horrors. The thought that the King of Hungary should pay tribute to a nomad chief was regarded as so outrageous that the Englishman had good reason to congratulate himself on being allowed to return uninjured to his master.

He departed, bearing King Bela's refusal.

A few weeks later another stream of refugees fled westward. The South Russian princes and their retainers flocked into Poland and Hungary with tidings of the terrible Tartars and of the cruelties they perpetrated.

For the Mongolian army had resumed its campaign of conquest soon after Kuyuk's recall, and, at the end of November 1240, had crossed the Dnieper on the ice.

The princes of Kiev flung the Mongolian envoys down from the top of the walls. On December 6th, Kiev, once the most beautiful town of South Russia and a centre of trade between the Baltic countries and Byzantium, ceased to exist (though later revived). The Mongols were advancing along the basin of the Dniester and the Bug into the uplands of Volhynia and Podolia. This was the basis chosen by Sabutai for the start of his next campaign.

For whereas Europe knew nothing about the Mongols, the latter were fully acquainted with European conditions, down to every detail, not excepting the family connexions of the rulers. Their immediate aim was Hungary, a wealthy and powerful

kingdom extending from the Carpathians to the Adriatic. They knew very well that King Bela was related to the Polish dukes Boleslaw of Sandomir and Conrad of Masovia, and also to the German duke Henry of Silesia. Henry, in his turn, was connected by marriage with King Wenceslaus of Bohemia. The territories of these princes were contiguous, so that Hungary might count upon immediate help from all four. That was why their armies must be kept busy until the Mongols had settled matters in Hungary.

Sabutai divided his forces into three main groups. The northern group, under Prince Kaidu, was to keep the Polish and Silesian troops at bay. The southern group, under Kadan, was to invade Hungary from the south, in order to give the local forces plenty to think about. Meanwhile Sabutai himself, with Batu, would deliver the main blow against the capitals Pest and Gran.

The reconnoitring forces, which were strong enough to conquer such a town as Sandomir by surprise attack, kept close watch on the movements of the enemy, until, at the beginning of March, the Mongols took the offensive.

III

Now Europe was to learn what Mongolian warfare meant. In accordance with Jenghiz Khan's tactics, the first blow was to strike terror and panic into the remotest limits of the country, to paralyse it by arousing a sense of such elemental and unavoidable destruction that resistance would seem foolish. Nothing was to be left of a conquered town beyond what might be useful to the Mongols. They did not massacre young women, clever handicraftsmen, or men worth pressing into military service as slaves. Refugees who got away with their lives bore a tale of horror, of murder, arson, rape, and senseless fury. People forsook their towns and villages, setting them on fire as they fled, the instant these fearsome riders approached, for the invaders were regarded as devils incarnate, as the scourge of God. The runaways found

asylum in fortresses, or hid themselves in forests or remotest wilds. The tribal name of "Tatars", now first brought into Europe from the East, was corrupted into "Tartars", the dwellers in Tartarus who had risen out of the nether-world.

No one guessed that this campaign of terror was a deliberate war-policy, partly intended to give the impression that the number of the invaders was limitless. Not more than 150,000 Mongolian riders in all had invaded Europe, but these, led with consummate strategy, accustomed to work on a large scale, to cover distances incredible to Europeans with a speed which the mail-clad and cumbrous chivalry of the European Middle Ages backed only by miscellaneous mass-levies could never dream of, could in one day set more than fifty miles of country in flames, and on the next be ready to fight a decisive battle at such a distance that the foe could never believe them to be the same army. The upshot was that the numerical strength of the Tartars was magnified to a fantastic degree.

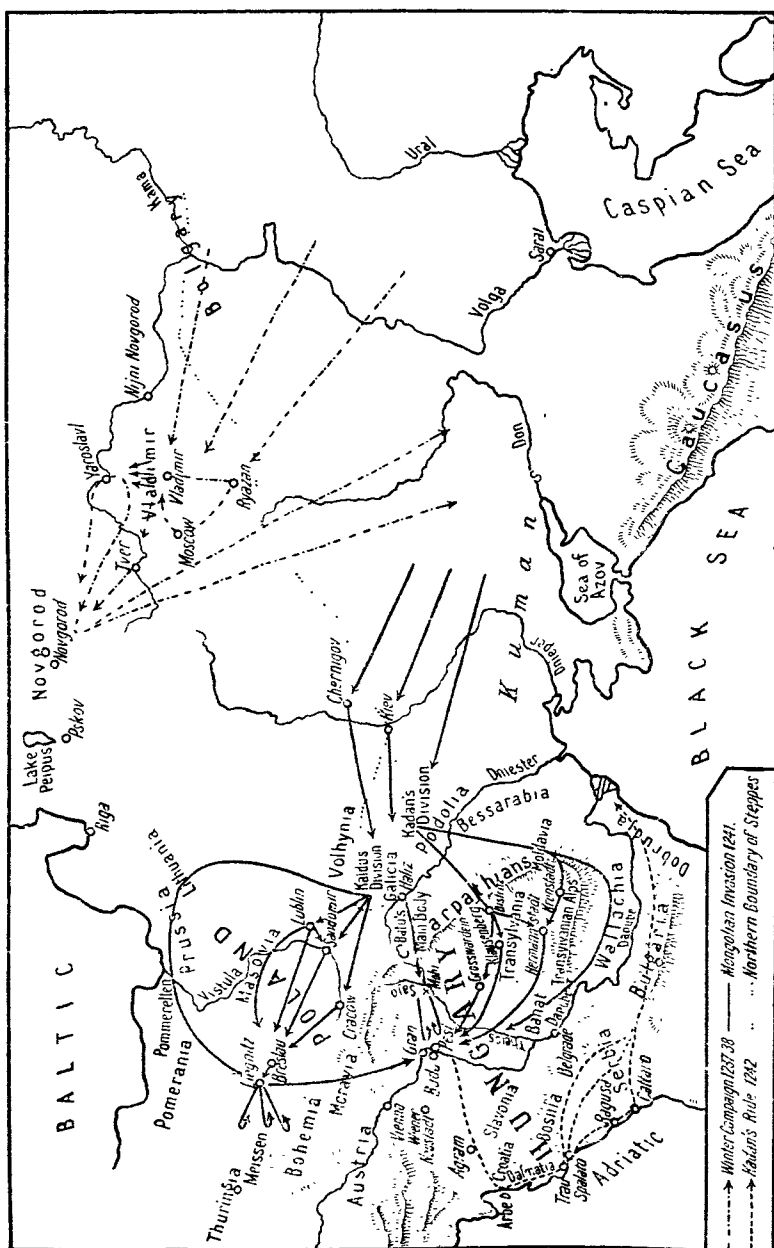
In December Kiev sustained such a "first blow"; and, five years later, the papal legate Giovanni Piano Carpini, on his way through the principality, observed "an enormous number of skulls and bones of slaughtered men lying on the plain"; while in Kiev itself "which used to be a very large and thickly populated town, there were standing barely 200 houses." Three weeks after the taking of Kiev, Podolia, Volhynia, and what is now called Eastern Galicia with its capital Halicz, were all in the hands of the Mongols. In February the advance-guard, making a sally into Poland, burned Sandomir. In March the offensive of all three army groups was carried on simultaneously. Kadan overran Moldavia and Bukovina; Batu took the Carpathian passes by storm; and Kaidu's mounted hordes poured across Poland. Three Polish armies tried to resist him, but were defeated and routed. On March 24th, the old and famous town of Cracow went up in flames; in the beginning of April the neighbourhood of Breslau was laid waste; and on April 8th, Kaidu's whole army was assembled outside Liegnitz.

For here at Liegnitz, Duke Henry of Silesia had got together

all the available forces against the Mongols; the barons and other nobles of his land; knights, cavalry, and infantry from Silesia and Poland; miners from the town of Goldberg; and a considerable force of Templars. The Duke of Oppeln, the Margrave of Moravia with his forces, the Teutonic Knights and other fighting orders which had possessions in the region, all hastened to his aid. He was still awaiting his brother-in-law, King Wenceslaus of Bohemia, who was marching into Silesia at the head of 50,000 men.

The Mongols were numerically weaker than the forces of Duke Henry, but when their spies reported the approach of a strong Bohemian army from the south-west, Kaidu resolved to attack the Duke forthwith. Henry was in danger of being shut up with his whole army behind the walls of Liegnitz, where he would be unable to deploy his troops. He did not know when the Bohemian auxiliaries would arrive, and believed he had reason to fear that, should he delay, the Mongolians would be reinforced. He decided, therefore, upon battle in the open field. He led his troops out of Liegnitz southward in the direction whence King Wenceslaus was coming. A few miles from Liegnitz, upon a wide plain surrounded by hills of moderate elevation (a place which became known later as the Wahlstatt—the Place of Choice), Kaidu overtook him and attacked on the morning of April 9th.

The Mongolian army did not look very large. It was not for some time that the European knights learned how those whom they called the Tartars attacked in such close order that the formation of 1,000 horsemen seemed no bulkier than 500 European knights. Silently, without their usual war-cries, and without even the trumpet-blasts which were a customary prelude to attack in those days, the Mongols charged on their rough-haired and sturdy ponies, guided only by their customary pennants. The men and the horses were protected by shields consisting of several layers of cow-hide. The riders were armed with curved swords, lances, and maces; but their most dangerous weapons were bows and arrows with which they were infallible marksmen;



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and, even in retreat, shooting backwards, they could inflict grave losses on pursuers.

Before the armies came into collision, the murderous hail of the Mongolian arrows had already driven the first of Duke Henry's four battle formations into headlong flight. But when the heavily armed and mailed knighthood attacked, the fortune of battle seemed to turn, and after a short though fierce struggle, the enemy beat a retreat. With exultant shouts, the knights pursued them, to learn, by painful experience, the old war-ruse of the Mongols. The long-extended and dispersed line of the Christian horsemen was suddenly attacked from an ambush by numerous nomads mounted on their swift ponies. With cut and thrust, they wrought great execution; and when their arrows were rendered ineffectual by the iron armour of the knights, they shot down the less protected horses. Once dismounted, a heavily armoured knight could offer little resistance.

Then, against the infantry, there was suddenly raised (so it is reported) "a bearded human head of hideous aspect, mounted upon a long lance. This sent forth evil-smelling vapours and smoke which threw Duke Henry's army into confusion, and hid the Tartars from their eyes." Under cover of the smoke-screen, the Mongols fell upon the enemy.

If this, in the middle of the thirteenth century, was the first gas-attack upon European soil, it has priority over the use of gunpowder, which the Mongols used two days later in the battle beside the Sajo. Unquestionably contemporary reports are full of accounts of the "sorcery" which the Tartars used to secure their victory over the Christian army. Duke Henry, most of the knights and noblemen, and the greater part of the infantry, were left dead on the field of Wahlstatt. The chroniclers record the losses as between 30,000 and 40,000. According to tradition the Tartars cut an ear from every Christian slain, filling therewith nine sacks which they sent to Batu as a memento of victory. As for the slain Duke, they cut off his head and carried it on a spear-point in triumph outside the walls of Liegnitz.

When the news of this defeat reached King Wenceslaus of

Bohemia he was only a few days' march from Liegnitz. Having with him no more than 50,000 men, he did not feel strong enough to advance against the Mongols. He knew that in the west the levies of the Landgrave of Thuringia and of the Duke of Saxony were ready to face the invaders, whose onslaught was expected from day to day. (Their scouts were already ravaging the Meissen district and the Glatz upland.) Wenceslaus therefore withdrew westward, to join forces with the other Christian troops.

But the Mongols had, for the time being, reached the western limit of their advance.

While Liegnitz was still burning, news came from Batu that on April 11th, two days after the battle of the Wahlstatt, he had annihilated the forces of King Bela and recalled his troops to Hungary, intending, after the Mongolian custom, to hand over Hungary to be plundered district by district. Kaidu was awaiting the arrival of the second army of his group. It had made a wide northward detour through Lithuania, defeated the Lithuanian army which tried to resist its progress, invaded East Prussia, and was hastening to Liegnitz by way of Pomerellen and Pomerania. It had fulfilled its task. Northward as far as the Baltic there was left no armed enemy capable of becoming a danger to the Mongolian flank.

The only Christian armies still able to put up a fight were concentrated in Saxony and Thuringia, while Wenceslaus had reached Königstein. But now Kaidu made a new detour. Instead of advancing westward, where the defensive forces were expecting him, he turned southward with the Mongolian riders, to a district where there was no enemy between him and Batu, and invaded Moravia. The feint succeeded perfectly, for the whole province was denuded of troops.

King Wenceslaus, who had just reached the Meissen district, had now to make forced marches back into Bohemia, but before he could reach Moravia that rich land had been completely devastated; the flourishing towns of Troppau, Mährisch-Neustadt, Freudenthal, and Brünn had been stormed and burned;

and Kaidu's Mongols had effected a junction with those of Batu in Hungary.

IV

Always when the Mongols attacked a realm and won victories that seemed so easy, contemporary chroniclers complained that the ruler of the attacked regions was incapable and unprepared. Nor did King Bela escape these reproaches, although he had done everything which a European monarch of those days could do, measures which would have been useful against an enemy fighting in accordance with the accepted rules of warfare, but which proved a pitiful failure when the onslaught was made with new methods of the Mongols.

At the first news of the advance of the Tartars, King Bela hastened to the Carpathians, had the passes blocked by abatts, called up the frontier-population for military service, and entrusted the command to an experienced paladin. Then he summoned a Reichstag in Buda, and issued orders that all men fit for service should procure arms and hold themselves ready to march.

But before the Reichstag could discuss and agree upon measures of defence, on March 10th a messenger arrived hot-foot to say that the Tartars were already attacking the passes through the Carpathians. Ere reinforcements could be sent, the paladin who had been put in command arrived with disastrous tidings. On March 12th the Mongols had stormed the defiles, had forced surrender, had butchered the whole garrison. He himself managed to escape with a few of his men. Within a day after this, on March 15th, the first Mongolian tuman was already outside the walls of Pest, having in three days ridden through 200 miles of hostile territory burning and slaying on the way. In three days a wedge had been driven into the country and cut the defenders' communications, while in the south the third army corps under Kadan was at work, having passed through Moldavia and Bukovina into Transylvania.

The King promptly dismissed the Reichstag. The bishops, counts, and barons hastened to their provinces, intending to return with levies as quickly as possible, while the mob assembled in front of the castle where Kotyan, Khan of the Kumans, was residing. "It is he who has brought the Tartars into Hungary," shouted the crowd. In a trice the castle was stormed, and Kotyan with his immediate followers was cut down. Hardly had the news of this "popular assize" reached the peasants than they, in their turn, rallied against the Kumans who were hastening from all directions to Pest in order to fight the Mongols. A general massacre began. After their first surprise, the Kumans undertook their own defence, giving the Hungarian peasants a Roland for an Oliver. They assailed farms and villages, killed anyone they could lay hands on, drove off the cattle, and made southward into Bulgaria. Thus were fulfilled the words of the warning which Batu had uttered to King Bela: "It is much easier for the Kumans to escape than it is for you. They, who have no houses, but live in tents, can perhaps take to flight; but you dwell in houses and have fixed towns and fortresses, so how will you escape me?"

Vainly did the King attack the tumans of the Mongols who were ravaging the neighbourhood of Pest. On their swift horses they were unassailable. They laid waste the villages, blocked the roads, dispersed the detachments that were hastening to the relief of Pest, appeared before the walls of the town, and irritated the defenders into making sallies, in which they were cut down, while the Mongols evaded a pitched battle; and so long as Bela had not yet assembled his forces, he did not dare risk pursuit.

It was a fortnight before sufficient levies arrived. Now the King of Hungary felt strong enough for a decisive battle. Coming out from behind the walls of Pest, and keeping his army well concentrated, he marched north-eastward. The Mongols withdrew. After four days' march, the Hungarian army reached Batu's camp where the Sajo debouches into the Theiss. Protected on the flank by the two rivers, and covered by woods, it was

unassailable. The King therefore conceived the plan of luring the Mongols on to the right bank of the Sajo which, ordinarily marshy and overgrown with reeds, was now in flood. Then they could be driven into the river.

King Bela fixed his camp on the heath of Mohi, a little way from the river. It lies on an open plain with an unrestricted view in all directions. To guard against the possibility of the Mongols trying to take his camp by surprise, he surrounded it with a laager of waggons which were chained together as a barrier to the enemy. Thus safeguarded, he awaited events.

That very first evening a Russian deserter brought information that the Mongols intended to cross the river during the night. There was only one bridge across the Sajo. At midnight Koloman, King Bela's brother, and Archbishop Ugolinus reached the bridge, flung themselves with all their forces upon the detachment of the enemy which had already crossed, and drove it into the stream. Then they placed a strong garrison at the bridge-head and returned to their camp. The Hungarians were confident of victory and eager for the fray, for their spies had informed them that the Mongolians had a force greatly inferior to their own.

During the night the Mongols brought machines to their side of the river, and, to the accompaniment of a thunderous noise and flashes of fire, they discharged a hail of stones upon the garrison at the bridge-head. The Hungarians, having withdrawn before this "devilish sorcery", found, when morning dawned, that the "Tartars, springing like grass-hoppers out of the earth", were already in masses on their side of the river. By five in the morning, the Mongolian crossing of the river was accomplished.

And at five in the morning Koloman and Ugolinus, with all their forces, returned to the charge, hoping to drive the enemy again into the Sajo. But this time the Tartars did not give way. After an embittered struggle, which lasted from five till seven, the Hungarians had to withdraw to their camp. They hoped that Bela's fresh troops, in a strenuous advance, would be able to scatter the pursuing Tartars; but instead they found that these

troops had to defend themselves in desperation against another Mongolian army which was attacking the camp from the south. This was Sabutai's division which, during the night, had crossed the Sajo below the camp, partly swimming, and partly upon a makeshift bridge which had been hastily constructed. Shortly after seven in the morning the battle was decided, and the Hungarian camp was invested. Then for five hours, until noon, it was fiercely assailed with stones, arrows, and burning naphtha. The ring of waggons intended to defend the camp now penned the besieged within a narrow space and proved their ruin. Twice did Koloman, Archbishop Ugolinus, and the Knights Templars make a desperate attempt at a sortie. But both these endeavours failed. Almost all the Templars were slain, and Koloman and Ugolinus were both severely wounded before they regained their improvised fortress.

Meanwhile, on the opposite side of the camp, something happened which was quite out of keeping with anything Europeans knew about the arts and customs of war. The ring of besiegers opened. The first who hurled themselves into this gap passed through uninjured. More and more tried their luck, and soon a stream of men was pouring through the gap in the besiegers' ring. The Mongols let them all through, and the tactics that had succeeded in Khwarizmia, succeeded here in Europe. Where a group of besieged, bravely led, wished to escape from the encirclement, the Mongolians fought like berserkers. But fugitives, thinking only of safety, were allowed to escape. To get away more quickly, these fugitives threw away all encumbrances, their arms and their armour, and took to their heels. Under stress of this impulse towards flight, the Hungarian army was completely routed.

Then the Mongols, upon their swift horses, pursued the fugitives. They cut down the exhausted men, they hunted the riders into marshes and morasses, they stormed the villages and churches in which the runaways had taken refuge, or set them on fire. In this horrible butchery, the last remnants of the Hungarian army were utterly destroyed.

King Bela had the luck to emerge from the camp undetected, and managed, on his thoroughbred, to outdistance pursuit. By devious paths he reached Pressburg on the Austrian frontier. His brother Koloman, though seriously wounded, was able to make Pest in safety. But he no longer had the moral energy to form a new front against the Mongols. All the endeavours of the citizens to induce him to stay in the town proved unavailing. Crossing the Danube, he made for Croatia, where he died soon afterwards as an outcome of his wounds and hardships. Archbishop Ugolinus and other distinguished churchmen and barons were slain when on the run. All Hungary north-eastward of the Danube was in the hands of the Mongols.

On this same April 11th, Prince Kadan and the southern army decided the fate of Transylvania. After he had defeated the German colonists in three pitched battles, and had taken Bistritz, Klausenburg, and Grosswardein, he was able to storm likewise the strongly defended Hermannstadt.

All was over but the shouting. In little more than a month the entire countryside from the Baltic to the Danube had been occupied and ravaged by the Mongols; Poland, Lithuania, Silesia, and Moravia had been laid waste no less than Bukovina, Moldavia, Wallachia, and Transylvania. The towns were heaps of ruins, the land was depopulated, the armies had been dispersed, the fortresses taken by storm. Hungary was a rich land, offering abundant scope for plunder; but what would happen after that? Which country would be the next victim?

V

Panic terror seized the nations of Europe. "A terrible dread of this barbarian people took possession of even the most remote countries, not only France, but also Burgundy and Spain, where the name of the Tartars had hitherto been unknown." The French Templar Ponce d'Aubon wrote to Louis IX (Saint Louis): "Learn that all the barons of Germany, including the King, all

the clergy, all the monks and lay-brothers, have taken up the Cross against the Tartars"; but he doubted the efficacy of the methods that were being adopted, for he went on: "And as our brethren have informed me, it may well happen that the Tartars, should it be the will of God, will conquer the Germans, whereupon there will be no one to resist them until they reach the frontiers of your country."

When the Queen Mother of France, outraged by the horrible news that came to hand, asked her son whether there could be no rescue from these dreadful foes, King Louis answered devoutly: "We have the heavenly consolation that, should these Tartars come, we shall either be able to send them back to Tartarus whence they have emerged, or else shall Ourselves enter Heaven to enjoy the rapture that awaits the elect."

This answer was in perfect accordance with the spirit of the times. The Mongols were, if not actually devils, so closely allied to the Devil that they might help him to destroy Christianity, and nothing but God's aid could avert the danger. In all the churches, therefore, earnest prayers were offered up for "rescue from the savagery of the Tartars." The Pope preached a crusade against them, Emperor Frederick exhorted his son and all the rulers of Europe to make ready to fight. But the dread was too great. Whoever took up the Cross did so with the proviso: "Should God not avert from us the fury of the said people." None of the German princes who assembled at Merseburg, none of the bishops who held a convention at Herford, had any serious thought of going to the war in Hungary. They were wholly concerned about the possibility of defending their own countries against the Tartar invasion.

It was considered that the Kingdom of Hungary had already been wiped off the map of Europe. A Bavarian chronicler records: "The Kingdom of Hungary, which began under Emperor Arnulf and has existed for three-hundred-and-fifty years, has been annihilated by the Tartars."

And just as Sweden, Lithuania, and the Teutonic Knights had tried to derive private advantage out of the defeat of the

Russian princes, so now did Hungary's ancient rivals cherish similar hopes. The Venetians, who had long claimed Dalmatia, plumed themselves on having "out of consideration for the Christian religion refrained from doing harm to the King at this juncture, although they might have undertaken a great deal." Duke Frederick of Austria took advantage of Bela's flight to Pressburg to lure the King into a fortress and then dun him for an old debt. Bela had to hand over all the hard cash and all the gold and silver ornaments he carried, and, for the undischarged balance, was compelled to pledge to the Duke three counties on the Austrian frontier before he could escape from this importunate creditor.

Bela's appeal for aid, when he succeeded in escaping from captivity, was fruitless. All that the Pope would do was to write him edifying letters and exhortations "to hold out firmly against the Tartars." Emperor Frederick, indeed, made King Bela's envoy swear fealty in their master's name in return for the promise "of defence by the imperial shields against the threatening Tartar destruction"—but he would not be able to undertake this, he said, until he had punished the "Lombard rebels" who of late years had raised their heads once more.

The Pope and the Emperor, the only persons who might have seemed competent to unite the forces of Europe against the Mongols, and who would have been able to outvie the generalship of these invaders by putting large forces into the field, were in deadly enmity with one another. Gregory IX preached a crusade against the Emperor no less than against the Mongols. His supporters suspected Frederick of "a secret understanding with the Tartars" and insisted that the Emperor's envoys had been seen in the Tartar camp. The Emperor, on his side, instead of levying troops against the Mongols, did so against the Pope's Italian allies, and invaded the Campagna. In letters to the kings of England and France, he accused the Pope of supporting the rebels against his authority, and that this made it impossible for him "to devote all his forces against the enemies of Christianity."

Meanwhile the Mongols, when the first fury of the devastation

was over, were settling down in Hungary. They gave the country an administration of a sort, appointed judges and officials, placed Mongol supervisors in charge of the towns that remained, and announced, through the instrumentality of prisoners they set at liberty, that anyone who would subject himself to them might return home without risk. Thereupon the refugees emerged from their hiding-places in the forests and the mountains the country became re-peopled by degrees, the peasants began to till their land, and those who lacked cattle found an easy way of getting some. All that was necessary was to bring a pretty Hungarian woman for the embraces of the new Mongolian masters, and in return he would receive "sheep, cattle, horses, and houses." Mongolian copper coin began to circulate. The chronicler remarks: "We had peace, and could market our produce; everyone was receiving his due."

VI

The Mongolian army rested throughout the summer and the autumn. Not until Christmas Day 1241 did it cross the Danube on the ice. While the bulk of the army surrounded the strongly fortified towns of Buda, Gran, and others, and stormed them in spite of desperate resistance, Batu sent Prince Kadan in pursuit of Bela. As, years before, Sabutai had hunted Mohammed Shah of Khwarizmia to death far and wide across his realm, so was Kadan to pursue the King of Hungary through the lands which still remained to him.

In January, Bela was at Agram in Croatia. He, too, had lost the courage and energy that were requisite for facing the Mongols. He could only run away. In February, he reached the Adriatic coast. Kadan followed him into Dalmatia, and the King fled to Arbe, one of the many islands that dot the Dalmatian seaboard. Kadan requisitioned ships, and destroyed the King's fleet in a naval action, but Bela escaped. The pursuer continued down the coast. By March Bela reached Spalato, and then he sought the

island of Trau, with the Mongols hot upon his heels. Kadan was making ready to take Trau by storm, when orders reached him from Batu to abandon the hunt.

While Kadan in the south and Batu in the west were completing the conquest of Hungary, the Mongolian advance-guard had already crossed the frontier of the kingdom. The savage horsemen reached Korneuburg, to the north-west of Vienna, and Wiener Neustadt in the south. "Without having sustained any harm, they seized a number of persons and cattle, and then returned to Hungary," reports the chronicler. They had reconnoitred the united forces of the Dukes of Austria, Carinthia, and many principalities, and in adjoining Bohemia was the army of King Wenceslaus—while Batu was making ready for a new campaign.

Then there came to him a messenger from distant Mongolia who had travelled 6,000 miles to tell the Prince that, in the heart of Asia, Ogatai the Khakan was dead, and it was necessary for him to return.

Batu wanted to continue the war, but Sabutai reminded him of the law of the Yasak, which commanded that after the death of the ruler all the offspring of the House of Jenghiz Khan, wherever they might be, must return to Mongolia to take part in a kuriltai for the election of the new Khakan. The law of Jenghiz Khan weighed more with Batu than the conquest of the western world. He broke off the campaign.

Europe was saved.

CHAPTER XVI

AMONG THE TARTARS

I

WHEN the Mongols vanished as suddenly and unexpectedly as they had come, departing from Hungary at the very moment when Europe was beginning to recognise how deadly was the peril which threatened its whole existence, no one knew that in the eternal struggle between the West and the East, the strongest and most dangerous blow which Asia had ever directed against the sister continent had been averted without serious intervention on Europe's part. No one knew whence and why the Mongols had come; no one knew why and whither they had departed. Had they really gone, once for all, or would they bring death and destruction to some other western land? Would they return? When? On whom would the next blow fall? Dread and uncertainty pressed like a nightmare upon the nations, making an indelible black wound upon their minds. Many investigators believe that a considerable part of the pessimism which affects Europe even to-day is the outcome of the subconscious and obscure anxiety roused in us by the notion of the "Yellow Peril"—a vestigial survival of the Mongolian terror of seven hundred years ago. To-day in some of the churches of the Eastern Confession, we hear in the litany such a petition as: "Against the wrath of the Tartars, O Lord, deliver us!"

Not until after the Mongols had departed did the full measure of the devastation wrought in Hungary, Silesia, and Poland become plain. It surpassed the worst expectations. From 60,000 to 80,000 men had been slain in the one battle on Mohi heath; in Pest alone, 100,000 persons had found their death; and in

other towns and fortresses, except for a few refugees and war-prisoners the Tartars had taken away with them, all the inhabitants had been slaughtered. Whole provinces were depopulated, villages and towns had been laid waste; "the fields had been insufficiently tilled, and among the survivors a famine fever prevailed which was no less deadly than had been the Tartars." Impoverishment and economic dislocation were the immediate consequences. Only in part could the injury be made good by vigorously fostering German colonisation. In any case Europe lay open to new attacks, regarding itself as defenceless and helpless.

Popular sentiment demanded that something spectacular should be done. The upshot was that Pope Innocent IV (to whom, in his struggle against Emperor Frederick, it was important to maintain prestige as supreme protector of Christendom), decided to send a letter "to the King and the people of the Tartars" in which he exhorted them to abstain from attacking and persecuting the Christians, threatening them with the wrath of God in this world and damnation in the life to come. But whither was he to dispatch his envoy, his legate? Who was the King of Tartary, and where did he live?

A delegation of Franciscans under the leadership of Giovanni Piano Carpini, papal legate and subsequently Archbishop of Antivari, speeded to the East—the direction in which the invaders had departed. A second copy of the papal letter was to be taken by Dominicans under Ezzelino to Asia Minor, for there, too, there was news of the Tartars. With the letter, the friars of the two young orders received the commission: "to make the most precise researches and to keep a watchful eye upon everything," and, at the same time, to report what this unknown people "might still have in their minds." With his companions, Carpini first applied to King Wenceslaus of Bohemia. The King passed him on to the Duke of Silesia in Breslau. Thence, by successive stages, always under the protection of the territorial authorities, he moved on to Cracow, Galicia, Volhynia, and Kiev. At Kiev the known world came to an end.

Carpini held counsel with the dignitaries of the town. The ten months' journey had made him and his companions ill. Now he heard that they would actually have to leave their horses behind, for these would certainly perish since the Tartars had neither hay nor straw—their mounts dug up grass and roots for themselves with their hoofs from beneath the snow.

But the fat old man who headed the delegation, having been able to secure attention and audiences in Germany when, on his preaching journeys, he had ridden through the country mounted on a little donkey which groaned under his heavy weight, showed once more that he had indomitable energy. He arranged to be conveyed farther eastward in a sleigh drawn by post-horses, which could be changed from village to village. In one of the villages he had to leave a member of the mission behind, for the man was exceedingly ill; but nothing would prevent his continuing his journey until, on the nineteenth day after leaving Kiev, just when the friars had camped for the night, Tartar riders, uttering loud cries, and "bearing arms in their hands, devils incarnate", rode down on them like a storm. The churchmen believed that their last hour had come, but the horsemen crowded round them inquisitively, asking them, through an interpreter, whence they came and whither they were going, and begging them for food and especially for bread, which the Mongols regarded as a great delicacy.

From this moment it seemed to the members of the mission that they must have fallen into another world. They were forwarded from post to post, being recommended from one high official to another yet higher. A dozen times they had to explain that they were ambassadors of the Pope, the Lord of the Christians. He had sent them to the Tartars, "because he would like the Christians to be friends of the Tartars and to live at peace with them". When this had been explained, they were forthwith passed on. The more distinguished the official with whom they came into contact, the more was their journey expedited. At length from early in the morning till late at night they were in the saddle, with a change of horses three or four times a day,

always advancing at a trot. Never did they see a town, never a fixed settlement; only the tents of nomads. Boundless was the plain, mighty were the rivers which they crossed on the ice—a vast expanse as if it had been a frozen lake. Then forward, forward across the steppes. On February 23rd they met the first Tartar horsemen, and it was not until April 30th that they reached Batu's camp beside the Volga.

It looked like an enormous town, except that, instead of houses, it consisted of gigantic round tents which attained proportions such as they had never seen before. Carpini learned that these tents could be placed on waggons, just as they were, and driven to the next camping-ground without being dismantled. The wheels of the huge waggons were twenty paces apart, the axle being as thick as a ship's mast. Two-and-twenty oxen, harnessed in two rows of eleven, dragged the gigantic wains.

Batu possessed six-and-twenty wives, each of whom had such a tent of her own. Each tent was pitched between from one hundred to two hundred carts carrying stores and household utensils, these carts forming as it were walls; and behind each of the big tents were a dozen smaller ones for the wives' children, female servants, and retainers. So vast was the camp that Carpini spent more than an hour from the outskirts in reaching Batu's audience-tent.

He already knew the etiquette of the reception. He must make obeisance before the entrance to the tent, must not tread upon the threshold, must kneel as he announced his mission. The friars, before being received in audience, had to walk between two fires that they might be purged from all evil. At the audience the papal brief was translated into "Russian, Saracen, and Tartar." When he had heard it, Batu would not take the responsibility of answering it himself, and decreed that Carpini, with his companion Benedict the Pole, must journey on into Mongolia.

"We did not know whether we were going to death or to life," writes Carpini in his report. "With many tears," the friars bade farewell to their companions who, by Batu's orders, were to stay behind. During the two months that had been spent

on the journey from Kiev to the Volga, the party had travelled all the time through the lands of the Kumans, and its destination had been familiar to them all, for the name of Batu as commander-in-chief of the "Tartar army" was fairly well known. He bore the agnomen of the Magnificent, but also that of the Merciful. In Kiev the envoys had learned that during the three years since the Mongols quitted Hungary, many of the Russian princes had been compelled to visit Batu's horde and swear fealty. No one knew now whither the chosen delegates were bound.

The leader of the Mongols commanded that they should be conveyed to their destination "as speedily as possible"; and Carpini had to learn how the Mongols rode. Horses were changed five, six, seven times a day, the remounts being always fresh and vigorous, and "if, during a stage, one of them could go no farther, it was simply left behind." They remained in the saddle till nightfall, "without having anything to eat"; and if they reached a station too late for food, the travellers "must wait for supper until next morning," and, even then, they got so little to eat that Carpini suffered continually from the pangs of hunger, and was amazed at the frugality of the Mongols. They rode across deserts where skulls and other human bones "lay in heaps upon the ground"; they rode through regions full of ruined towns and fortresses; they crossed lofty mountain-passes where, at high summer, the snows lay deep and the cold was biting; they heard the names of cities, countries, and peoples previously unknown to European ears. This ride, made at express speed, lasted from April 8th to July 22nd.

Then they reached the imperial horde to learn that now, five years after the death of Ogatai, his son Kuyuk was about to be crowned Khakan.

II

The long-standing hostility between Batu and Kuyuk, which had already interrupted the European campaign for two years, was also the reason for the delay in the election of the Khakan.

When Kuyuk quitted Batu's army, he was in no hurry to return to Mongolia where he had nothing to expect but the reproaches of his father Ogatai, and he found it more agreeable to while away the time in hunting and festivities—until a year later a letter from his mother Turakina summoned him to return with all haste to Karakorum, because Ogatai had died suddenly. Ogatai had directed that his grandson Shiramun was to be his successor; but Jagatai, the last surviving son of Jenghiz Khan, though a very sick man, entrusted the regency and the right of summoning the kuriltai to the ambitious Turakina, who thus became supreme in the movement for the election of the new Khakan. Turakina availed herself of the opportunity, since Batu and most of the princes were far away in the west, to intrigue in all possible ways on behalf of the choice of her son Kuyuk. A regime of favouritism and machinations set in. Turakina's favourite slave, a Persian named Fatima, was the centre of these wiles. Her accomplice, a Mohammedan named Abd-ur-Rahman, got control of the finances of the realm and won the favour of the Regent by extorting larger and larger sums from the people by way of taxes and other imposts, and handing over a considerable proportion of the proceeds to Turakina for use in gifts and corruption.

The prime minister and faithful guardian of Jenghiz Khan's empire, the Chinese sage Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai, saw that his life-work was imperilled. During the reign of Ogatai he had constructed an orderly State in which there was space and there were chances of a decent life for the subjugated and settled population who were safeguarded in some measure against the tyranny of the nomadic Mongol conquerors. In the occupied provinces, a good administration had been installed, the laws were observed, taxes were reasonable, a system of weights and measures had been established, schools had been opened for the education of the children of the Mongols after the Chinese manner, while the powers of the satraps were restricted and their tendency to arbitrariness and violence kept within bounds. Thanks to his wise and moderate government, agriculture, trade, and industry had

begun to flourish once more amid the ruins of the conquered realms. Now the destruction of all that he had created seemed imminent. Ogatai's meritorious advisers were dismissed, being only able to escape arrest by flight to Batu or some other of the princes. At length Turakina, the Regent, decreed that Abd-ur-Rahman was to have sole charge of the administration.

But Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai refused to take orders from Abd-ur-Rahman. He explained to the Regent: "The Empire was the property of the late Emperor. Your Majesty has gained possession of it, and wishes to destroy everything. I find it impossible to carry out your commands any longer." Too proud to flee, he was content to say: "For twenty-five years I have been head of the administration, and have no reason to believe that I have made any mistakes in carrying out my charge. Does the Empress now wish to put me to death as a reward of my innocence?"

Abd-ur-Rahman urged his mistress to arrest Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai, but, angry though she was, Turakina did not venture to lay hands upon the great statesman whom Jenghiz Khan himself had appointed prime minister. Not until, shortly after retiring from office, Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai died "out of sorrow and vexation on account of the state of public affairs," was a charge of corruption levelled against the dead man. But when a search was made at his residence, there was found, instead of the expected hoard of treasure, no more than a collection of musical instruments, ancient inscriptions on stone and metal, books and paintings new and old. This was all which the omnipotent minister had got together in the way of personal possessions during a quarter of a century's administration under two rulers. There were also among his papers about a thousand essays which he had written on the most diversified themes.

By the time when the news of Ogatai's death at length reached Batu and the other princes in Europe, and they were summoned to return, Kuyuk was already back in Mongolia. Batu realised that it was too late for him to do anything which might counteract the influence of the Regent and her son.

But although Batu could not hope to prevent the choice of his adversary Kuyuk as Khakan, he could postpone the election by delaying his own return. In breaking off the campaign, he had abided by the law of the Yasak, and was entitled to demand that the other Jenghizides should be no less scrupulous. Without his presence, since he was the eldest of the surviving descendants of Jenghiz Khan, the new Khakan could not be chosen. He took his time, therefore. Slowly assembling his army, he marched through Slavonia, the Banat, and Wallachia, burned Belgrade and half a dozen other cities on the Danube, and, in Dobrudja, quietly awaited the coming of Kadan, who, meanwhile, had made his way across Dalmatia as far as Ragusa and Cattaro—which went up in flames—and then on by a southerly route through Bosnia and Serbia, whose inhabitants fled from the devastation into the forests and ravines; subsequently invading Bulgaria, which was already a kingdom of considerable importance. After sustaining this first defeat, the Bulgarian Tsar submitted to the Mongolian conquerors, pledging himself to pay tribute and to provide them with contingents for their army.

Kadan's latest successes decided the western frontiers of the Mongolian realm. A review was held beside the lower reaches of the Danube, and it was agreed that the mountain crests of the Carpathians, the Transylvanian Alps, and the Balkans should be regarded as the provisional frontiers of Batu's fief. The lands beyond these mountains were simply left to their fate. Depopulated and weakened as they were, they could not be dangerous neighbours, and could at any time be used as the starting-point of future campaigns against the West. Prince Nogai remained behind as viceroy of the frontier territories, his army being posted in the neighbourhood of the Black Sea.

After this campaign, the Volga, which had been the boundary, became the central river of Batu's fief. Its course divided his realm into approximately equal halves and Batu chose the ancient city of Sarai, near the mouth of the river, as his capital. He had it rebuilt, providing it with palaces and storehouses. But he had no thought of abandoning his ancestral mode of life and settling

down. Sarai was to be nothing more than the nodal point of his empire to which merchants from all parts of the world would bring the produce of their respective countries, and where the levies made upon tributary princedoms and cities would be delivered. He himself wished to remain a nomad, as his father Juji and his grandfather Jenghiz had been. He selected the fertile regions along the lower course of the Volga as the main area for his wanderings. Every spring his horde migrated from the shores of the Caspian northward as far as the Kama, and retraced its steps as soon as the autumnal equinox arrived. On the other bank of the Volga was established his son Sartak, whose migrations, accompanied by wives, children, and tents, took the same course as those of the father. In winter, when the river froze, he and his Mongols would cross the ice to greet Batu, their sovereign lord. And even though Batu and his train wore clothing made of the finest Chinese silk and brocade, or rare and costly furs, over these they sported thick Mongolian cloaks made of wolf-skin, fox-skin, or badger. The ruler's table utensils were of gold and silver, but the drink served in these goblets was koumiss as of old, and every day the milk of 3,000 mares was consumed in his horde.

Thus year by year Batu moved up and down the Volga, using one pretext after another to defer compliance with the demands of the messengers from Mongolia who summoned him to attend the kuriltai. But in the end he was forced to recognise that the election of the Khakan could no longer be postponed. Each petty Mongolian prince was ruling in accordance with his own pleasure, and the Regent Turakina, wishing to curry favour with them on behalf of her son, let them do whatever they pleased. The realm was falling into disorder. At length, therefore, Batu agreed to the summoning of the kuriltai and promised to attend in person—and yet, at the last moment, was content to send his brother back to Mongolia, bearing a message that he himself had a sore foot and could not travel. They might proceed to the election in his absence.

III

The ruler of the world was to be chosen. The mighty ones of the earth had assembled from all directions, from wealthy civilised countries, and from fine big cities amid the wildernesses of the Mongolian steppes in order to be beforehand in paying homage to the new Khakan, to beg of him some favour or other, to have their right to sit upon the throne of their fathers confirmed, to avert a Mongolian invasion. More than 4,000 envoys were present in the plain of Karakorum, the new focus of mankind—and not one of them had the right of admission within the board-fence which surrounded the great marquee of white brocade in which the 2,000 descendants of Jenghiz Khan were to choose the worthiest among them to be Khan of Khans.

Together with the Mongolian peoples they flocked around the fence which was covered with pictures displaying the great deeds and the victories of Jenghiz Khan. In this fence were two gates. One was open and unwatched, for through it only the supreme ruler might pass, so what occasion was there to guard it? No ordinary mortal would be so presumptuous as to approach it. At the other gate warriors stood guard armed with swords, bows, and arrows, to make sure that none but Mongol noblemen, princes of the blood, army leaders, and viceroys, with their trains, should pass. If anyone who had not the entry tried to slip through, he was soundly flogged or, when the guards had expelled him, they would, to the amusement of the beholders, shoot at the offender with blunted arrows.

The envoys stood without the precinct awaiting the result of the election. Then they rode for many miles across the plain to the "golden tent" of Ogatai, constructed throughout of gold-embroidered silk, covered by silver-gilt plates. From a distance they could watch while the princes established Kuyuk upon the golden imperial throne and paid homage to him.

Then, these foreign rulers and envoys—among whom were a Seljuk Sultan, Grand Prince Yaroslav of Russia, Princes from China and Korea, from Fars and Kirman, from Georgia and from

Aleppo, great dignitaries from the Caliphate, emissaries from the ruler of the Assassins—when the ceremonies and feasting were over, could appear before the Khakan, bowing the knee four times and offering their gifts. Among the splendidly clad potentates equipped with oriental splendour, were the two Franciscan friars over whose plain brown habit there had also been placed ceremonial robes: Giovanni Piano Carpini, Legate of the Holy Sec, and his companion Benedict of Poland. After handing the papal brief to Kuyuk's courtiers, they had had to spend a month in the imperial horde, awaiting an answer. In the camp there were many Nestorian Christians, and numerous prisoners from Hungary and Russia with whom they conversed. They learned much about the life of the Mongols, their manners and customs; and they were beginning to understand how terrible a danger threatened the Christian world from this hardy and victorious warrior folk of distant Asia.

Then it was all over. They received the imperial answer, and were ordered, though it was mid-winter, to make for home as speedily as possible.

IV

Until well on into the nineteenth century, Kuyuk's answer to the Pope was unknown in Europe. Then scholars discovered a free Latin translation; and only quite recently, in the archives of the Vatican, has been found the original dispatch in the Persian tongue, bearing Kuyuk's Mongolian seal. The document runs as follows:

"By the power of the Eternal Heaven, We are the all-embracing Khan of all the Great Nations. It is our command:

"This is a decree, sent to the great Pope that he may know and pay heed.

"After holding counsel with the monarchs under your suzerainty, you have sent us an offer of subordination, which we have accepted from the hands of your envoy.

"If you should act up to your word, then you, the great

Pope, should come in person with the monarchs to pay us homage and we should thereupon instruct you concerning the commands of the Yasak.

"Furthermore, you have said it would be well for us to become Christians. You write to me in person about this matter, and have addressed to me a request. This, your request, we cannot understand.

"Furthermore, you have written me these words: 'You have attacked all the territories of the Magyars and other Christians, at which I am astonished. Tell me, what was their crime?' These, your words, we likewise cannot understand. Jenghiz Khan and Ogatai Khakan revealed the commands of Heaven. But those whom you name would not believe the commands of Heaven. Those of whom you speak showed themselves highly presumptuous and slew our envoys. Therefore, in accordance with the commands of the Eternal Heaven the inhabitants of the aforesaid countries have been slain and annihilated. If not by the command of Heaven, how can anyone slay or conquer out of his own strength?

"And when you say: 'I am a Christian. I pray to God. I arraign and despise others,' how do you know who is pleasing to God and to whom He allots His grace? How can you know it, that you speak such words?

"Thanks to the power of the Eternal Heaven, all lands have been given to us from sunrise to sunset. How could anyone act other than in accordance with the commands of Heaven? Now your own upright heart must tell you: 'We will become subject to you, and will place our powers at your disposal.' You in person, at the head of the monarchs, all of you, without exception, must come to tender us service and pay us homage, then only will we recognise your submission. But if you do not obey the commands of Heaven, and run counter to our orders, we shall know that you are our foe.

"That is what we have to tell you. If you fail to act in accordance therewith, how can we foresee what will happen to you? Heaven alone knows."

This dispatch is in line with the charter sealed with the red seal of the Khakan issued by Jenghiz to his commanders when he sent them forth to subjugate new realms. The might of the Eternal Heaven had given the Khakan all lands from sunrise to sunset, and failure to obey his commands was a crime against God. No harm would be done to those who recognised his overlordship, but such must tender the established levies in goods and money, men and cattle, which must be made over to the Mongols; and, in return for war-service, they would receive their share of the spoil. But any who made the slightest resistance would be annihilated and exterminated.

Together with this epistle, Carpini brought news to the effect that the new Khakan was preparing a fresh campaign against Europe, that the Mongols intended to advance once more into Hungary and Poland, into Prussia and Livonia—and would wage war for eighteen years against Christianity—unless the Pope and the monarchs of the West voluntarily complied with his demands.

Carpini had seen enough to know that any isolated country of the West could easily be overrun by the Tartars, and that nothing but a firm alliance could avert disaster. He reported that he had refused to conduct a Mongolian return-embassy to Europe, for "should they see how disputes and mutual warfare are the order of the day here, they will feel more inclined than ever to attack us."

For the threat of war was genuine, and the dispatch conveyed no misunderstanding. The Pope's second embassy to Asia Minor under Ezzelino brought an answer in the same sense from Baichu, viceroy of those regions: "Your envoys have spoken big words, and we do not know whether you charged them to speak thus or whether they have done so on their own authority. In your brief you write: 'You slay, annihilate, and murder many persons.' The inalterable will of God and the Commands of the Khan who holds sway over the whole world decide our doings. One who obeys the Khan's commands may remain upon his land, water, and property, and lay his power in the hands of him who

rules over the whole world. But whoever fails to obey this command, and runs counter to the will of our Lord, will be eradicated and annihilated."

But whereas Carpini, being a shrewd man of the world, had been able to adapt himself to the new environment, and was the first to bring to the West a sound picture of Mongolian life, Ezzelino, a zealot lacking a due sense of the importance of his mission, had only been able to put his own life and that of his companion in peril. His stay in Baichu's camp was one of those tragi-comedies which history is apt to produce when representatives of widely different outlooks on the world are suddenly thrown into close contact.

Ezzelino proudly informed the Mongolian dignitaries: "I am the Legate of the Pope, who is placed high above all the kings and princes of the world, and who is honoured by them as their Lord and Father"; and the Legate was infuriated by the Homeric laughter of the Mongols and by their mocking demands as to how many realms and countries the Pope had conquered, how many peoples he had subdued, and whether his name, like that of the Khakan, was famous and dreaded all the way between the eastern ocean and the western ocean. In his simplicity, Ezzelino replied that neither the Pope nor he himself had ever before heard of the Khakan. Certainly the Khakan could not be Lord of the World, for the Pope, as successor of St. Peter, had the divinely granted authority until the end of days.

The Mongols, accustomed to measure the importance of foreign potentates by the magnitude of the gifts which they sent in token of submission, inquired what gifts the Legate had brought from the Pope.

"None," replied Ezzelino. "It is not the Pope's way to bestow gifts, least of all upon an unknown infidel. He is wont to receive gifts from others."

Ezzelino stubbornly refused to bend the knee before Baichu. Merely pushing back the hood of his gown, he made a slight bow.

Such presumptuousness astonished the Mongols. They began to suspect that the embassy was a fraud, and that the envoys

must be spies, the forerunners of a mighty Christian army. They cross-questioned Ezzelino as to whether the Franks were not thinking of a speedy invasion of Syria. They had been told as much by their Georgian and Armenian vassals who were informed as to the plans for a new Crusade. But when they heard that no new army was being prepared, their patience was exhausted.

While Ezzelino and his followers were awaiting an audience, in Baichu's tent discussion was going on as to whether the whole embassy or only a few of its members should be put to death. Some recommended that only two should be executed, and the others sent back to the Pope. Some, however, advised that even the two should not be slain, but merely flogged and flung into prison. Then the Franks would come to set them free. Here, in a foreign land, the Frankish army could easily be defeated, and then the Mongols would be free to invade Europe once more. It was seriously proposed to strangle only the leader of the embassy, who should be skinned, then the skin should be stuffed with chaff and sent back to the Pope. Baichu was of opinion that all the envoys should be decapitated, and no further fuss should be made about the matter. But his first wife raised objections, saying that when this execution became known in the West, no further envoys would be sent to Baichu, and this would cut off the source of the valuable presents which envoys usually brought. (Such presents were a perquisite of the wife in whose presence the envoys were received.) Besides, by murdering the envoys, Baichu would probably arouse the anger of Kuyuk. Reports were already current that the Khakan had appointed a new viceroy in Western Asia. Baichu decided, therefore, that the envoys should not be put to death, but should be sent to the Khakan.

But he did not allow for Ezzelino's obstinacy, who had no thought of setting forth God-knows-whither in order to visit the Khakan, for his instructions had been to hand the papal brief to the first Mongolian high authority he might encounter.

Henceforward the envoys were treated as persons of no account,

persons to fool whom was a fine joke for the Mongols. Their brief had been taken, but when they applied for an answer they were kept waiting all day in the blazing sun on the pretext that Baichu was being consulted about the matter. Nobody remembered to offer them food or drink. People would come out to converse with them, and hold their sides for laughter when Ezzelino fervently insisted that his Pope was Lord of all mankind.

He was thus played with for more than two months, until at length he was told that the answer to the Pope was ready, but it was necessary to await the coming of a general expected to arrive from the court of the Khakan. A further three weeks elapsed before the general turned up; then a week was spent celebrating his arrival; and finally Baichu remembered the unlucky envoy. As a courteous host, he asked his guest to decide whether it would be better to kill these troublesome fellows or send them home, and the guest decided that they should be sent back with a return-embassy.

Thus it came to pass that the western chroniclers suddenly began to report the arrival of Tartar envoys, whom the Pope received with great distinction, presented them in private with scarlet robes trimmed with costly furs, and gave them considerable sums of gold and silver. He conversed with them for a long time through interpreters, but the whole proceedings and the reasons of their coming were kept so profoundly secret that the matter remained hid from the clergy and even from the most intimate confidants of the Vatican.

THE CONQUEROR'S GRANDSONS

I

WHEN Kuyuk ascended the throne, 500 waggons laden with gold, silver, silk, and brocade were stationed on a hill close to the imperial tent. This was Ogatai's crown-treasure, and Kuyuk had it distributed among the princes who, in turn, bestowed it as they thought best upon their retainers, their troops, and their servants. Everyone rejoiced, for again they had a generous, a liberal Khakan.

Besides, he demanded unconditional submission and the payment of personal homage by their rulers from all the envoys of Asia, while in the answer delivered to the friars from the West he had practically declared war. The Mongols could count, therefore, on more glory and more spoil, upon more horseback-raids and more battles.

But those who had hoped that Kuyuk was thinking only of conquest, and that in other respects everything would go on as it had gone on under the regency, were to be profoundly disappointed. Hardly were the festivities and receptions over than Kuyuk broke with his mother, and punishment was visited upon all those who had, for their own ends, done amiss during the regency. Turakina's favourites were executed, her spoiled darling Fatima being drowned as a witch. All the dispositions of his father Ogatai were confirmed, and the old counsellors were reinstated.

For the Mongol nobles there now came times in which they could think regretfully of the good nature and tolerance of Ogatai and of their own glories under Turakina. Kuyuk wanted order, and established it with an iron hand. The princes who had played ducks and drakes with the revenues they received from

their fiefs, and had even pledged them in advance, were forbidden to continue the independent administration of the provinces. He commanded that the armies, when they made conquests, should hand over a due proportion of the loot to the State treasury; and he punished the generals and princes who oppressed and plundered the indigenous population. Above all he further strengthened the power of the Khakan by restricting the authority of the Jenghizides in their respective fiefs, over which they had hitherto held sway as independent rulers, and he demanded from them unconditional obedience to the law of the Yasak.

Strict and arrogant by disposition, he allowed no one in his entourage to take liberties. He never smiled. It was a great favour when the Khakan addressed anyone directly, instead of privily communicating his orders to his ministers, who then proclaimed them aloud. He was a harsh and unapproachable ruler, who personally supervised everything, never forgave a wrong, and was not chary of exhortations and reproaches.

There was only one person whom he never found occasion to chide, and that was Syurkuk-Teni, the widow of Jenghiz Khan's youngest son Tuli.

Mongolian history has a good deal to say about notable women, those who, when widowed, were able to save the tribe from decay by showing superabundant energy and sagacity; those who rode beside their husbands to war, and fought boldly; those who were able regents, skilled intriguers, and wise counsellors. But of all these, Syurkuk-Teni was perhaps the most outstanding. A niece of Togrul (ruler of the Keraites), when Jenghiz conquered the Wang-Khan, he bestowed her upon his youthful son Tuli for wife. Though she herself was then very young, she must have known how to inspire respect, for when Tuli died, his brother Ogatai, Khakan, wanted to wed her to his son Kuyuk. Syurkuk-Teni declined the honour, but managed to do so in a way which neither aroused rancour in Ogatai nor offended Kuyuk's pride. She declared that she wished henceforward to live only for her four sons, to maintain order and prosperity in their fiefs, and to supervise the education of the youngest of them.

In actual fact there prevailed admirable order in her immediate domain, which was Mongolia proper, the kernel of the realm. Every clan was well acquainted with its own pastures; taxes were paid punctually; there was no dispute nor envious rivalry among the chieftains. Each of her decisions was law, and she could never be accused of injustice. As in the days of Jenghiz Khan, these chieftains kept their hordes prepared to take the field at the first summons, and to hasten in any direction prescribed by the Khakan; and since most of the nomad clans belonged to this fief it was owing to Syurkuk-Teni's influence that the Mongolian military power remained in fighting trim, free from partisanship and dissension.

Although she had been brought up a Nestorian Christian, she showed an equal respect for all religions, as Jenghiz Khan's laws prescribed. Her son Hulagu was educated by a Nestorian and her son Kublai by a Chinese sage. She founded a mosque and a Mohammedan school, which bore her name. Her eldest son, Mangu, was sent to the West with Batu; and when Kuyuk and some of the other princes left the European army, Mangu remained by Batu's side as a faithful friend throughout the campaign. But as soon as the kuriltai was summoned, she sent for him, and went with him and her three other sons to Karakorum where they swore fealty to Kuyuk.

When Kuyuk, on ascending to the throne, distributed the contents of the 500 waggons laden with treasure, it was not to one of his own wives or to one of the magnates of the realm that he entrusted the distribution, but assigned this honour to Syurkuk-Teni. This showed that Kuyuk had not taken amiss her refusal to marry him, but contrariwise esteemed her highly.

II

Kuyuk had done what he thought best in all parts of his realm, had reduced the princes to the most meticulous obedience, and had consolidated the power of the Khakan—except for one

fief with which he did not interfere, that of his old adversary Batu.

Batu had had good reason for postponing the termination of the regency as long as possible. He needed time in which to develop his fief into a realm which would excel all others in power and greatness. Now, arranged and subdivided, it extended from the Sea of Aral to the Carpathians and the Southern Dvina—a strange realm such as may have loomed before the mind of Jenghiz Khan when he began his conquests of the settled populations.

Every territory, every principality, existed as of old, being ruled as before by its own princes; but each ruler must obtain his charter of government from the Mongol horde. He was responsible to the Khan for the quiet and order of his principality, for the punctual payment of taxes, the tithes of furs, beasts, men, gold, and coined money. The Khan had nothing to do with the subjugated peoples, for he merely enjoyed the fruits of their labour. He was the King of Kings, whose word decided their lives and destinies. Before his throne the family disputes among the princely races were settled, and his decision determined the succession.

Just as, a generation earlier, Jenghiz Khan's camp had been the focus of the Asiatic world, so now Batu's city of tents became a place of pilgrimage for the princes of his realm, and the glory and splendour of his horde made them speak of it as "The Golden Horde".

In between the principalities, in between the settled populations, Mongolian camps were established at every important strategic point; hordes circulated in the neighbourhood of these points; and between the various camps and their commanders a continuous service of riders was organised. In a few days, from one end of the realm to the other, from the Sea of Aral to the Vistula, an army could be mobilised. Then woe to any adventurous neighbour, to any rebellious prince, to any town, which might have dared to withstand the exactions of one of the Khan's baskaks or tax-gatherers. Six hundred thousand warriors, of

whom a quarter were Mongols, obeyed Batu's commands, continuing to live as nomads in the immemorial way, almost devoid of contact with the settled population.

It would have been foolish to attempt the forcible subjugation of the ruler of such an empire, and Kuyuk, Ogatai's successor, cherished other plans. He behaved as if he had forgotten that it had been Batu who effected the postponement of his election for four long years, was the only one of the Jenghizides who failed to appear at the coronation, and who, thereafter, did not come to pay homage to the Khakan. But hardly had he set his own empire in order than Kuyuk, as if all was well between him and Batu, set out for the West, declaring his intention of preparing for the campaign against Europe, and of completing the suddenly interrupted conquest of the West. Yet he moved at the head of a very small army—far too small for such a campaign. His way led through Batu's fief, and, should he wish to do so, he could call upon Batu's troops.

Syurkuk-Teni had misgivings. The journey led through her domain, and she saw that Kuyuk was a sick man. He suffered from pains in the limbs. To alleviate these pains he drank to excess, was even more arrogant and more gloomy than usual. It was universally known that Batu moved up and down the Volga accompanied by no more than a thousand warriors, and Syurkuk-Teni decided, cost what it may, to act. She sent a warning messenger to Batu.

With scant ceremony, Batu raised a large force and moved eastward to meet Kuyuk. Neither of them announced his intention. Was Kuyuk travelling westward to call Batu to account, or did he really wish to join his cousin in resuming the campaign against the West? Did Batu set out eastward in order to pay the long-postponed homage, or in order to fight the Khakan? Was a fratricidal war between the grandsons imminent twenty years after the death of Jenghiz Khan, a struggle between the two mightiest rulers in the world? They were separated by no more than a few days' march when Kuyuk suddenly died, after less than two years' reign.

Immediately after Kuyuk's death, Syurkuk-Teni, with her four sons and the greatest chieftains of her tribe, set out to join Batu.

This settled matters. The princes of the lines of Juji and Tuli had joined forces, and Batu, being the eldest living descendant of Jenghiz Khan, was loth to allow a hostile Khakan to be set over him a second time. In accordance with tradition, however, he appointed as Regent Ogul-Gaimish, Kuyuk's first wife; but he immediately summoned a kuriltai at the camp which he was occupying when Kuyuk died.

Vainly did the offspring and adherents of Kuyuk protest against this summons; and vainly did they insist that, according to the law of the Yasak, a kuriltai should be summoned in the original homeland of Jenghiz Khan. All the princes of the races of Juji and Tuli, all Batu's generals, and all the Mongolian chieftains who, so long as there was no Khakan, regarded Syurkuk-Teni as their mistress, assembled in Batu's camp. At this meeting were present the majority of the Jenghizides and the majority of the army-commanders, and they declared themselves competent to proceed to an election.

One of the generals, who had come as representative of Kuyuk's adherents, demanded the election of Ogatai's grandson Shiramun, whom Ogatai had specified as his successor.

That had been the will of the Khakan, and the will of the Khakan was law. How could the chieftains choose anyone except the nominee of the Khakan? But young Kublai, of whom Jenghiz Khan himself had said: "If you are ever in doubt what to do, ask this boy Kublai," exclaimed to Kuyuk's generals, "You were the first to dispute Ogatai's word. You knew Ogatai's will, and nevertheless chose Kuyuk instead of Shiramun. How can you dare to ask that we should now be guided by this rede?"

Therewith the succession to the throne definitively passed away from the descendants of Ogatai.

Batu was the eldest; Batu was the ruler of the mightiest fief, the conqueror of the West—and the kuriltai offered the crown to Batu.

Batu refused. He had grown used to the fertile Volga steppe, and did not wish to change it for the rude climate of Mongolia. He had built himself an empire, and this sufficed him. Now he repaid Mangu for loyalty during the campaign against the West, repaid Syurkuk-Teni for her warning when Kuyuk set out against himself, and nominated Mangu, Tuli's eldest son, as the worthiest successor to the throne of the Khakan.

Mangu was chosen.

But to obviate any possible objections to the legality of the choice, a new kuriltai was to be summoned in the original home of the Mongols, between the sources of the Onon and the Kerulen, that all the princes and chieftains should swear fealty to the new Khakan at the foot of Burkan-Kaldun, where Jenghiz Khan had been buried.

Syurkuk-Teni's secret ambition was thus fulfilled. Rivalry between the dynasties had been dissipated. The heritage of Jenghiz Khan passed from the line of Ogatai to the line of Tuli.

III

Such a change of dynasty could not be accepted without demur by those who considered themselves disadvantaged by it. Twice Mangu summoned the princes of the races of Ogatai and Jagatai to a new kuriltai. Upon the second summons, they and their trains set forth for the place of election, but in their waggons they carried, instead of gifts and food, concealed weapons, intending at the time of the festival to fall upon the Khakan and his supporters when they should be drunk.

The plot was discovered; the princes and their retainers were arrested; whereupon their officers declared that they had acted without knowledge of the princes, and the ringleader fell on his own sword.

This behaviour was new to the Mongols. They had known crime and punishment, but not a conception of honour which would lead to suicide as atonement when a crime was discovered.

Deeply moved, Mangu wished to forgive the other conspirators on account of their fidelity and love for their masters, but the other princes and army-leaders insisted upon the punishment of the guilty, and the seventy officers of the train were put to death. Then Mangu demanded that the Regent Ogul-Gaimish and Shiramun's mother should pay homage to him; but both women rejoined that Mangu had himself sworn fealty to Ogatai and his descendants. By now Mangu's patience was exhausted, and as a result of this refusal punishment was visited upon all who had taken part in the conspiracy. The two women were drowned and their advisers were executed. The princes of Ogatai's and Jagatai's race were slain or banished; they were robbed of their troops, which were distributed among the loyal princes. With the aid of Batu's and Mangu's armies, an executor of the realm made a search of the whole vast territory from Mongolia to Otrar on the Syr-Darya, which was the fief of the successors of Jagatai, and nowhere was there left alive one of the princes or nobles who had resisted the election of the Khakan. Two other judges set forth for the army in China, which was the fief of the descendants of Ogatai, and there, tuman by tuman, they were purged of Mangu's adversaries.

Harshly and consistently as this elimination of the refractory cousins and nephews was carried out, the new Khakan's action seemed perfectly reasonable to all concerned. No one, not even those who were put to death, expected anything else. Clemency would have been weakness. Even the few exceptions which Mangu commanded in favour of the more youthful princes and the hero of the Polish and Silesian campaign (Ogatai's grandson Kaidu) made it necessary for his successors to carry on fierce civil wars for decades—for these princes never recognised the switch-over from the Ogatai dynasty to the Tuli dynasty, and were continually reviving a campaign in favour of the former.

But as long as Mangu lived, there was no further resistance. He was an exemplary Khakan, such as the Mongolian Empire needed after the decade of interregnums that had followed Ogatai's death. A genuine Mongol of the old stamp, to whom

war and hunting were the only worth-while things in life, he made the ancient simplicity of manners a principle of his rule. Ruthlessly he put an end to the luxury and extravagance which had begun to make themselves evident at the Mongolian courts, and went so far as personally to control the expenditure of his wives.

He was not instigated to this course by avarice. The notes of hand which his predecessors and their favourites had given to merchants and purveyors were discharged in full by the imperial treasury. When he was informed that the subjugated people had been impoverished by the long period of extortion, he forbade the collecting of arrears of taxes and debts, and introduced a system of graduated income-tax, for, as he was wont to say, it was more important to him to retain his subjects than to fill his treasure-houses. All the revenues of the provinces were applied to paying the cost of the local armies and to the promotion of postal communications. When the vassal princes sent him gold, silver, or luxuries as tribute, he informed them that he did not need treasure but warriors, and that they must send him troops. His energies were mainly devoted to checking luxury because it softened his Mongols, and he wanted to keep alive in them the spirit of Jenghiz Khan. With the utmost strictness he saw to it that they should remain a sturdy warrior people, inured to dangers and hardships, as they had been in the days of his grandfather, that they might be able to resume and carry to a successful conclusion the campaign for world conquest which had been interrupted on all fronts for the ten years following upon Ogatai's death.

This generation of the grandchildren had grown up in the days of unceasing victories; in its earliest youth it had heard of nothing else than distant and yet more distant campaigns; had seen nothing but the arrival of larger and ever larger caravans laden with spoils; more and more princes coming to pay homage—and it was wholly dominated by the ambition of equalling or even excelling the ancestors of those great times. It regarded itself as the executor and fulfiller of the wonderful task then begun.

All the same, the whole spirit of these grandchildren had changed. Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai's work had not been void of effect. Mangu fully understood the significance of civilisation, and knew how to prize science and art. He surrounded himself with sages, and liked listening to their disputes about philosophical and religious questions. When he sent his brother Hulagu to Western Asia, Hulagu was commissioned to destroy the sect of the Assassins and the realm of the Caliphs, but at the same time was instructed to free the famous mathematician Nasr-ed-Din, who had been pressed into the service of the ruler of the Assassins, and to bring him with all honour to Karakorum, where he was to build an observatory. Mangu established a central government department staffed by Persian, Uighur, Chinese, Tangut, and Tibetan officials, who were ordered to compile dictionaries of these tongues. At his court there were permanent envoys from all parts of the world, Indian, Western Asian, and Russian princes, Chinese dignitaries, and what not; and in the reports of William of Rubruquis, the envoy sent by King Louis IX of France to the Khakan, we have an involuntary and beyond question unintentional testimony to the intellectual culture and political sagacity which prevailed at this period in Mangu's environment—for William of Rubruquis detested the Mongols.

IV

There was a remarkable prelude to William of Rubruquis' mission.

A few years after the Mongols withdrew from Western Europe, rumours began to circulate that this or that Tartar prince had been converted to Christianity. They came from Western Asia, and were disseminated by Nestorian Christians who were dispersed throughout the Asiatic continent in numerous communities. But the tidings conflicted too much with the terrible and recent experience of the Mongols' behaviour to inspire much confidence.

This mistrust did not disappear until, in December 1248, there came to King Louis of France, who was at that time in Cyprus engaged upon the final preparations for his Crusade against Egypt, two men as envoys from the Mongolian viceroy of Western Asia (Persia and Armenia) Ilchikadai. They brought a letter to the King. In this epistle, Ilchikadai wished success to the Christian arms against the Moslems, declaring that he himself had been sent to Western Asia charged to free the Christians from oppression, to bring them again into honour and repute, and to rebuild their destroyed churches, that they might say their prayers and carry on their ordinary business in peace. He informed King Louis of the Khakan's wish that no distinction should be made between the Latin, Greek, Armenian, and Nestorian Christians, for, in the Mongol ruler's eyes, all who prayed to the Cross were alike. But the envoys, who themselves were Nestorians, declared that many of the Mongol noblemen, although not yet actually Christians, were likely to become Christians, and that even the Khakan himself was in a mood that foreboded conversion.

This unexpectedly cheerful intelligence greatly pleased King Louis. He wondered how he could best express his joy to the Khakan, and do that monarch due honour, and he decided, on the advice of the envoys, to send a costly tent-chapel.

It was made of a scarlet textile with a golden edging, and embroidered on the cloth were pictures of the most important events in the life of Jesus. The King also sent a highly ornate altar, the appointments for the celebration of Mass, and a relic no less important than a splinter of the true Cross. This was a truly royal gift. A brief from the papal legate who accompanied the King on the Crusade informed the Khakan of the joy of the Roman Church at the news of his approaching conversion, for the Church would accept him among the number of its best-loved children. He was exhorted to be inviolable in the true faith, and to recognise that the Roman Church was the mother and head of all the Churches, for the Pope was God's vicerent on earth to whom all that called themselves Christians

owed obedience. Friar Andrew of Longjumeau, one of the most famous missionaries of the East, was charged with the honourable mission of bearing the King's gift and the message of the Church to Karakorum.

The outcome of the embassy was stupefying. Kuyuk was dead, Ogul-Gaimish received the envoys as Queen Regent, accepted the gifts, and publicly declared at a great assembly: "The King of the Franks has sent us these presents in token of his subjection."

From the Mongols' point of view it seemed a matter of course that an embassy to Karakorum bearing rich gifts could not come for any other purpose than to express subjection to their monarch. The King of the Franks, alarmed at the prospect of the campaign against the West threatened by Kuyuk, had acknowledged Mongolian supremacy. It was logical, therefore, that Ogul-Gaimish should assure this western potentate that it behoved him to remain duly obedient, never to omit the payment of tribute, and next time to come in person in order to pay homage. Generously she sent some return gifts, including an asbestos cloth from China whose incombustibility aroused much astonishment in Europe. King Louis sent it to the Pope for safe-keeping as a relic. In actual fact, not one of the posterity of Jenghiz Khan had the remotest thought of conversion to Christianity.

When Andrew of Longjumeau set forth on the long return journey after this unexpected issue, he may—like William or Rubruquis subsequently—very well have thought how little warrant the Nestorian envoys had had for their reports concerning the conversion of the Mongol nobles. Enough that a Khan should accompany one of his Christian wives to chapel, or should allow the friars to burn incense in his tent and say their prayers, for immediately it would be bruited abroad that he was about to be baptised, although the next day with the same equanimity he would visit a mosque or a Lamaist temple, and the day after would order the shamans to mutter their incantations on behalf of his health. The fact that the Mongols, being tolerant, allowed Christians to practise their religious rites

without restraint and gave Christians access to official positions, made the western Christians, used to the oppressive ways of the Moslems, believe that the Mongolian princes must have a secret inclination towards Christianity. Since, moreover, Nestorianism was the form of Christianity most widely prevalent in the East, Longjumeau may readily have conceived the notion that what was no more than a simple greeting from Ilchikadai to the King of the Franks was something which, by Nestorian officials in Mongolian service, had been deliberately magnified into the invocation of a blessing upon Christians who had taken up arms against the Moslem realm. These same officials might have cunningly seized the opportunity of trying to secure, under the aegis of the Khakan, an admission from King Louis the Catholic that their sect, reputed as heretical, was really entitled to equal rights with the Roman Church. The whole mission was thus the outcome of a mystification.

But by the time Andrew of Longjumeau was back in Syria, it was too late to make any further inquiries. King Louis's Crusade had already come to a bad end. At Mansurah, in the Nile delta, he had been ignominiously defeated, taken prisoner, and was only ransomed at great cost after the evacuation of Damietta. Now he was in Palestine, fortifying Caesarea with all possible speed. Nevertheless there arrived fresh and ever fresh rumours that at least one of the minor Mongolian khans was about to be converted to Christianity; and a recognition of the enormous importance which such a conversion would have for the Christian Church induced the pious King of France, despite the ill-success of his first mission, to embark on a fresh venture.

He entrusted this difficult task to a Franciscan friar, William of Rubruquis, a learned man well acquainted both with the East and with the West, who had accompanied the King on the Crusade. Friar William had read Carpini's report, profited by the account of Longjumeau's experiences, and paid a visit to Hayton, King of Armenia, who had already visited Karakorum as a vassal of the Mongols. Thus Rubruquis was fully prepared for his mission.

But Friar William was not dispatched as a fully accredited envoy. If the King of France was to avoid being regarded by the Mongols as no more than a vassal in search of aid, he must not a second time (least of all after his defeat at Mansurah) give occasion for misunderstanding. It was thus decided to send Rubruquis as a missionary asking permission to settle down in Mongolia and preach Christianity among the Mongols.

Rubruquis spent more than six months in Mangu's camp near Karakorum, where adherents of the most varied religions—Moslem, Shamanist, Buddhist, and Christian (of various sects)—lived together in outward amity despite their mutual detestation. He made acquaintance with representatives of all the nations of Asia. He was a scholar well able to use his eyes and endowed with a vivid power of description. His desire was to make the West intimately acquainted with this foreign people, and we owe to him an account of his journey and his reception which, next to that of Carpini, is the most detailed and accurate report we possess concerning the thirteenth-century Mongols. He realised what a danger they were to the West; he loathed them as enemies of Christianity; and he was enraged by the arrogance which led them to regard themselves as all other men's superiors.

"They ask exhaustive questions, in a way which seems to imply that they intend to visit us on the morrow and take all our possessions," he writes in great indignation. But he has to admit that they are exceedingly well informed. An officer wishes to know who is the strongest monarch in Europe; but when Friar William replies that the German Emperor holds this position, the Mongol answers that this is untrue, for the King of France must be the strongest. In actual fact, at this date, Frederick II had been dead for three years, and his son Conrad was fighting vainly for the succession. The Mongols missed no chance of entangling Rubruquis in conversation about European affairs. They knew all about King Louis's Crusade and the French monarch's defeat; and they had a lively interest in his future plans.

At Karakorum, Friar William could move about as he pleased.

He was quartered with some Nestorian monks, and described them as boasters; and in the disputations which Mangu from time to time organised among the representatives of the various religions, he defended the cause of Christianity.

But though Rubruquis could go to and fro without let or hindrance, he was questioned from time to time by various officials as to his wishes and intentions. His answers were carefully scrutinised; he was sounded as to what he knew about the earlier embassies; and since he himself stoutly maintained that he was no more than a missionary of religion, one who wished to preach Christianity, the Khakan gave him lengthy audience, and personally expounded the attitude of the Mongols towards religion:

"We Mongols believe that there is only one God, through whom we live and through whom we die. But just as God gave the hand several fingers, so likewise there are various tasks for men. God may have given you your Holy Scriptures, but you Christians do not guide your lives thereby." No doubt he had in mind how the Mongols regarded it as a matter of course that they should obey every command of the *Yasak*, and how the various religious zealots at his court were perpetually quarrelling, for he went on: "You surely do not find, for example, in Holy Writ that one man should disparage another?"

Friar William, who gives a detailed report of this conversation with Mangu, replied: "No, Lord, but from the first I have given you to understand that I do not wish to quarrel with anyone."

"I was not referring to you in particular." Mangu proceeded to develop his thought: "Nor, I think, do you find in your Scriptures that anyone should depart from justice for the sake of lucre?"

Rubruquis rejoined: "No, Lord. I did not come hither to earn money. I have rejected money when it has been offered me."

"Again I say," replied the Khakan, "that I am not speaking of you in particular. What I tell you is that though God gave you the Holy Scriptures, you Christians do not observe them. But to us He gave soothsayers, and we do what they have told

us, living together in amity." Then he concluded curtly: "You have been here a long while. It is time for you to return home."

The friar had no further opportunity of discussing the Christian faith with the Khakan. Regretfully he writes in his report: "Had I had Moses' power to work miracles, perhaps I could have convinced him."

Notwithstanding Rubruquis' asseverations, Mangu must have divined the true purpose of his mission, for he gave the friar a dispatch to the King of France, and in this the Franciscan is described as an envoy.

The dispatch is a command to the King of France and other great lords and priests to come and pay homage to the Khakan:

"Should you refuse to do this, saying to yourselves, 'Our country is far away, our mountains are high, our seas are wide,' and should you, trusting in these defences, prepare an army against us, we shall remember what we have ordered. He who makes easy what was difficult, and who brings near what was distant—the Eternal God—knows well likewise."

Mangu did not underestimate his adversaries, but he realised his own power. The fulfilment of Jenghiz Khan's testament, the conquest of the whole world, was not a utopian idea should the Mongols remain united, but lay well within the domain of the possible. Never before had so comprehensive a plan for bringing the earth under one dominion been drafted; and never again was it so close to realisation.

A quarter of a century had passed since Jenghiz Khan's death. Mangu was the third successive occupant of the throne. There had been periods of regency when the government was self-seeking and corrupt, periods of internal dissension, of fraternal strife; two of the four branches of the Jenghizides had been decimated—but through all vicissitudes the Mongolian armed power had remained as indestructible as a rock. Mangu could put into the field an army of a million warriors perfectly equipped; an avalanche whose progress would not be stayed until the end of the world had been reached, until "there shall be only one ruler on earth as there is only one God in Heaven."

But whereas Jenghiz Khan had had a unique aim, the extension of the nomads' dominion over the whole world without thought of the why or the wherefore, Mangu's reflections gave him pause. Some shadow of doubt, some deliberation concerning what would happen afterwards, must have troubled him, for there is a ring of perplexity in the concluding sentence of what the ruler of the Mongols wrote to the King of France: "But when, by the power of the Eternal God, the whole world from sunrise to sunset has been unified in happiness and in peace, then it will become plain what we shall have to do."

World dominion was his duty, and he would ruthlessly establish that dominion over millions of corpses. But what should he do with it when he had it? From the mentality of Jenghiz Khan to that of Mangu, the grandson who resembled the first Mongol conqueror so closely, a long step had been made.

CHAPTER XVIII

A GENERAL ONSLAUGHT

I

MANGU had made a fresh distribution of the world. When, at the close of his life, Jenghiz Khan allotted four fiefs to his four sons, he bestowed on Ogatai Eastern Asia and the overlordship. Now Ogatai's successors had lost both. The armies in Kin had been purged of those who had taken sides against the new Khakan. Ogatai's last descendants, who still ruled over their own fiefs, were in Western Mongolia, towards the Altai. Eastern Asia was free, so Mangu appointed his brother Kublai (who had been educated by the Chinese sage Yao-shi) viceroy in Kin. Kublai was to organise the resumption of the struggle against the South Chinese realm of the Sung. Central Asia from Turkestan westward belonged to the descendants of Jagatai, but the fief bestowed upon them by Jenghiz reached only as far as the Sea of Aral and the Oxus, and Mangu had no thought of extending their domains and their power by assigning to them the subsequently conquered provinces of Persia. He sent his brother Hulagu to Western Asia, in command of "two warriors from every ten tents", to subjugate the realms beyond the Oxus.

Thus the Mongolian world acquired a new aspect. Tuli's sons held sway over a realm which extended from the shores of China to the shores of the Caspian, while Mangu kept with him his youngest brother Arik-Buka as viceroy of Mongolia.

Only Batu's realm, originally the fief of Juji, was left as it was. When he sent Friar William back to Europe, Mangu said to the envoy: "There are two eyes in a man's head, but although there are two, there is but one field of vision. What one eye sees, the

other sees also. So is it with me and Batu. We want the same thing."

But though Mangu was on friendly terms with Batu, the conquests with which Mangu hoped to round off his realm in Asia were of more importance to him than the West which, in accordance with the subdivision of the fiefs, would accrue to Batu. Thus it was only thanks to its position in the remotest West that Europe owed its immunity from a new Mongolian invasion compared with which the first storm would have been trifling.

Once more Batu's warriors made raids into Galicia, Lithuania, and Esthonia. Nogai, his viceroy in the Russian steppes, extended his control over Serbia and Bulgaria; but to the Mongols these were no more than frontier skirmishes—while the general onslaught in Asia was simultaneously directed towards the East and towards the West.

II

Hulagu was given two special commissions by the Khakan: "You must destroy the fortresses of the Assassins; and you must bring the Caliph under the yoke."

Three-hundred-and-sixty mountain strongholds crowned the rocky peaks of the Elburz, spreading terror throughout the Moslem world.

In the year 1090, Hassan ben Sabbah, the Old Man of the Mountain, had founded the fanatical sect of the Assassins, having for the previous nine years permeated Northern Persia on behalf of the Mohammedan secret league of the Ismailites of Egypt, making recruits and preaching a holy war against the Seljuks. Northward of Kazbin, in the almost inaccessible mountains bordering the southern shores of the Caspian, ruled a petty prince of the uplands. Hassan ben Sabbah chose this eyrie, Alamut, as his residence. He entered it as a holy ascetic, but ere long the word of the previously established monarch became of little account. Still, since a religious man should not take

something for nothing, when he dismissed the king from his fortress, Hassan gave in exchange a draft for 3,000 gold pieces upon the treasury of the Sultan, payable in the great city of Damghan—and the governor of Damghan did not dare refuse payment.

Being now Lord of Alamut, Hassan built in a sort of Devil's Punchbowl wholly surrounded by mountains, to which he gained access through a subterranean passage, a paradisaical garden, with gilded airy castles, tropical flowers, precious fruit-trees, and shady palms. He chose as his adherents young and vigorous men who were hot-blooded and firm of will. Being a sage and a chemist, he was acquainted with the effects of hashish and similar drugs, and knew what doses to prescribe. When a youth awakened in this charmed garden from the fumes of hemp, the visionary figures of his drugged dreams continued to haunt his intelligence. The loveliest maidens, singers, dancers, lute-players surrounded and served him. Never had the imagination of these poverty-stricken mountaineers presented them with so much splendour and beauty. Then, at the climax of delight, he would relapse into a hashish dream, awakening after many days in the very spot where he had gone to sleep.

When the addict related his experiences to the initiates of the sect, they all knew what to say. They told him he had been in paradise, that which the Koran promises true believers who die fighting for the Prophet. The grace of Hassan had shown him the lovely places he would inhabit should he die in the service of the Sheik-al-Jabal, the Old Man of the Mountain, Hassan ben Sabbah, Lord of Alamut. From that moment, the young man became a Fedai (one of the devoted), ready, disguised as a merchant, a beggar, or a dervish, to wander miles over hill and dale slaying any designated to him by his master. He had no other weapon than a dagger, for he was not to do his deed secretly, was not to hide or take to flight, but to be ready to die in the act. He sought this death to gain paradise more quickly, buying eternal ecstasy at the cost of his own life.

It was upon the services of these Fedais that the fearful power

of Hassan ben Sabbah depended. One who understood and despised his fellow-men, a prey to burning ambition, he was determined that all should bow before him in terror. He surrounded his person with an unapproachable nimbus, collecting ancient parchments, secret writings, astrological symbols and instruments. The slightest resistance to his commands signed the offender's death-warrant. He himself never left his acropolis, and was visible only to the innermost circle of initiates. In his eyrie he remained secure for thirty-four years, closely following all that went on in the world of Islam and continually extending his control. By purchase, forced conversion, and treachery, he brought the adjoining mountain districts under his sway, spread his net wider and wider, till his threads extended over Iran, Syria, Asia Minor, and even into Egypt. Everyone who wanted to rid himself of a rival, everyone whose ascent was blocked by a superior, became one of Hassan's agents, betraying the secret plans of the court; and always a Fedai could be dispatched to thrust a dagger into the heart of a sultan on some festal occasion, a triumphant commander when celebrating victory, or an official whose influence seemed overweening. No venture seemed too bold, no crime impossible to the Fedais. None of those who sat in the seats of the mighty felt safe, for at any moment a dagger might flash in the hand of one of these fanatics who desired nothing better, as soon as he had committed his murder, than to die pierced by the arrows of the guard (for none would venture close to a Fedai), shouting: "We sacrifice ourselves for our Lord." So it came to pass, ere long, that no one was bold enough to resist an order issued by the Sheik-al-Jabal, the Old Man of the Mountain—the title given to Hassan ben Sabbah by the crusaders, and proudly borne by him and his successors.

For many of the most distinguished crusaders perished by the daggers of the Hashishans, the Assassins, and this spread the name and the fear of the Old Man of the Mountain into Europe. When, in 1231, Duke Louis I of Bavaria was assassinated on the bridge at Kelheim, and even on the rack the murderer would not disclose who had commissioned him to the deed, it was generally

believed that the criminal must be one of the Fedai. Thus far had extended the reign of terror of the Old Man of the Mountain.

Throughout Western Asia, throughout Persia and Armenia, there was no principality in which, during the last one-and-a-half centuries, the daggers of the Assassins had not reaped their bloody harvest. Vainly did the Mohammedan sultans and shahs endeavour, a dozen times over, to clean up this nest of murderers. One who did not, at the first announcement of his hostility to the Sheik-al-Jabal, become the victim of the dagger of a Fedai, could not fail to notice that in his rear rebellions were continually breaking out, assassinations becoming more and more numerous, until at length he realised the overwhelming strength of the Old Man of the Mountain.

Nothing but dread of Mongol vengeance could have moved the Iranian princes to master their fear of the members of this sinister sect, and to join forces with Hulagu when he summoned them to fight against the Assassins, whom he was determined to put to the sword "down to the children in the cradle". But even the Mongols were not strong enough to measure their forces against Alamut.

For three years the Mongolian army, which hitherto had been accustomed to brush towns and fortresses out of its way, was held at bay by this impregnable acropolis, until, after the death of the reigning Sheik-al-Jabal, his weakly successor surrendered to the pressure of famine. Even then a hundred of the strongholds in the Elburz still held out.

Then Hulagu made the prisoned Sheik send an order to the commandant of these fortresses to open their doors and destroy their fortifications, after which the garrisons could be exterminated in accordance with the Mongol fashion. When the demolishers got to work upon Alamut itself, the walls proved so strong that they resisted pickaxe and sledge. Hulagu sent the dethroned ruler of the Assassins to Mangu at Karakorum, but the ex-Sheik was murdered before he reached his destination—certainly not by Mongols, who would never have dared to touch

the person of a prisoner on the way to the Khakan. The deed was done despite their vigilance. Also the secret writings of the Assassins had been burned before the besiegers could lay hands on them.

Six weeks after the fall of Alamut, the Mongol army crossed the Tigris, and Hulagu's envoys rode to the court of Caliph Mustassim, the grandson of Nasir who had invited Jenghiz Khan to make war against the Shah of Khwarizmia. For five hundred years the Abbasid Dynasty of the Caliphs of Bagdad had held spiritual sway over the Mohammedan world, though most of their temporal dominions had been lost. All the sultans and all the shahs had had to bow before their doctrinal decisions. But now Hulagu demanded that the fortifications of Bagdad should be destroyed, that the Caliph should pay homage and render tribute.

The Caliph answered: "Young man, misled by the days of good fortune, you have become in your own eyes the Lord of the Universe, and think that your commands are the decisions of fate. You ask what will never be given. Do you not know that from West to East all who hold the true faith are my servants? Did I wish to do so, I could make myself master of the whole of Iran, but I have no wish to conjure up war. Walk, therefore, in the paths of peace, and return to Khorassan." Mustassim's envoys declared that anyone who laid hands upon the sacred person of the Caliph would infallibly perish; and Hulagu's astrologer, a pious Moslem, prophesied six terrible misfortunes should the Mongols attack the capital of Islam.

This prophecy cost the astrologer his life, and the next prophet hastened to foretell Hulagu's complete success. Within a week the Caliph's army had been routed, and a day later the Mongolian advance-guard was close to Bagdad, the religious capital of Islam. After three weeks' siege, the suburbs were stormed, and the Caliph surrendered unconditionally. For six days and six nights the town was pillaged, the mosques were burned, and the inhabitants massacred. Then Hulagu announced that the place had become his property, that the surviving inhabitants

were his subjects, and that no further acts of violence must be performed. No harm had been done to the Christians, who had taken refuge in their churches, for it was the traditional policy of the Mongols to win over those sections of the population which were hostile to the rulers against whom they were fighting.

The Caliph was forced to reveal where his treasures were hidden, and all the riches which the Abbasids had got together in the course of half a millennium were heaped up before the tent of Jenghiz Khan's grandson. To the Caliph, who, since being taken prisoner, had been given nothing to eat, Hulagu held out an ingot of gold, saying: "Eat that!"—"No one can eat gold," replied the Caliph. "If you knew that, why did you not send it to me?" rejoined the Mongol. "Had you done so, you would still have been eating and drinking peacefully, and without a care, in your palace." Then he had Mustassim trampled to death by the hoofs of his horses.

Thereafter the Mongols ran riot over Mesopotamia and Syria. Only the towns that surrendered promptly were spared. Only princes who came at once to pay homage were allowed to retain their dignities and their possessions. Aleppo, having refused to surrender, was taken by storm and pillaged for five days, the inhabitants being slain or enslaved. Damascus, which opened its gates to Hulagu, was left unharmed, a Moslem prince being appointed governor. On one occasion the defenders of a fortress asked that a Moslem should swear upon the Koran that no harm should be done to the inmates, for they did not know Hulagu's religion. The oath was taken—and then the whole population was massacred, for having doubted Hulagu's word.

Jenghiz Khan began the conquest of Western Asia by the destruction of the realm of Khwarizmia; under Ogatai, the Mongolian forces had extended their sway into Armenia; now, by destroying the Caliphate, Hulagu completed the conquest of Western Asia. The Mongolians advanced irresistibly across Mesopotamia and Syria to the Mediterranean coast. Once more

panic spread before them. The Mohammedans abandoned their towns, property was scattered, while the price of camels rose to fabulous figures. Only one refuge remained, Egypt, the last bulwark of Islam. But Hulagu had already dispatched his envoys to the Sultan of Egypt, demanding unconditional submission.

III

In the eastern parts of the Mongol dominion the position, both military and economic, was confused. After the death of Ogatai the Mongols, lacking firm leadership and without a plan of campaign, had contented themselves with fighting border skirmishes against the Sung realm along the southern boundaries of the Kin Empire; but when new and more capable Sung generals proved not only able to resist, but could advance to the attack and wrest various towns from the Mongols, the Mongolian generals resorted to the ancient tactics of the peoples of the steppes, making raids into the neighbouring provinces for the sole purpose of gathering spoils. The result was that the cities and villages were laid waste, while the untilled fields became choked with weeds. A broad belt of desolation had formed between Kin and Sung.

Since a general attack on Sung had now been decided upon, Kublai determined to begin by an enveloping movement which was on a level with the boldest deeds of Jenghiz Khan and his generals.

The Sung Empire was protected along the whole length of its northern frontier by the rivers of the Hwai-ho and the Han-kiang, as well as by mountains and fortresses. The attempt to force a passage from the north seemed hopeless. Sung armies might be raised in the depths of the country for hundreds of years and sent to protect the frontier, while for hundreds of years new chains of fortresses would arise beyond the border. If Sung were to be conquered, it must be overthrown, as formerly the Kin Empire had been, by marches which made a detour to

the west, so that the Sung could be simultaneously invaded from the south and from the north. But westward of the Sung Empire was a seemingly insuperable barrier, mountain chains several hundreds of miles in length, savage outliers of the Kwen Lun Mountains and the Himalayas—like a wall cutting off the plain of China from the lofty plateau of Tibet.

Nevertheless, though this formidable mountain-world was believed to be impenetrable, Kublai invaded it at the head of 100,000 men. Starting from Ning-hsia, the ancient capital of Hsi-Hsia, he led his riders southward along a valley leading up into the region of the ice-giants, crossed various passes, to enter another watershed; then, turning westward, along mountain paths leading through ice-bound valleys he climbed into the border regions of Tibet. Warlike tribes which had never been subdued defended every foot of the way. Daily the Mongols had to fight, and daily they were victorious. Tribe after tribe was subdued, was forced to supply guides into the territory of the next tribe and to furnish provisions, while men were pressed to fill gaps in the ranks of the Mongols. Thus, fighting intermittently, he made his way for a thousand miles into a mountain world which no army had ever traversed before. At length he reached the banks of the Kin-sha-kiang, on the borders of what is now Yunnan. Here his advance was resisted by the troops of the kingdom of Nan-Chow, reinforced by various native tribes. The envoys whom he sent to demand surrender were murdered. The Mongols attacked and defeated the enemy. The king sought refuge in a mountain stronghold which was taken by storm. Then he fled to the city of Yunnan. Kublai sent General Uriangkatai, son of the great Sabutai, to deal with the monarch, while himself marching against Tali, the capital of the country. It was a strongly fortified city, and next day it was to be taken by storm.

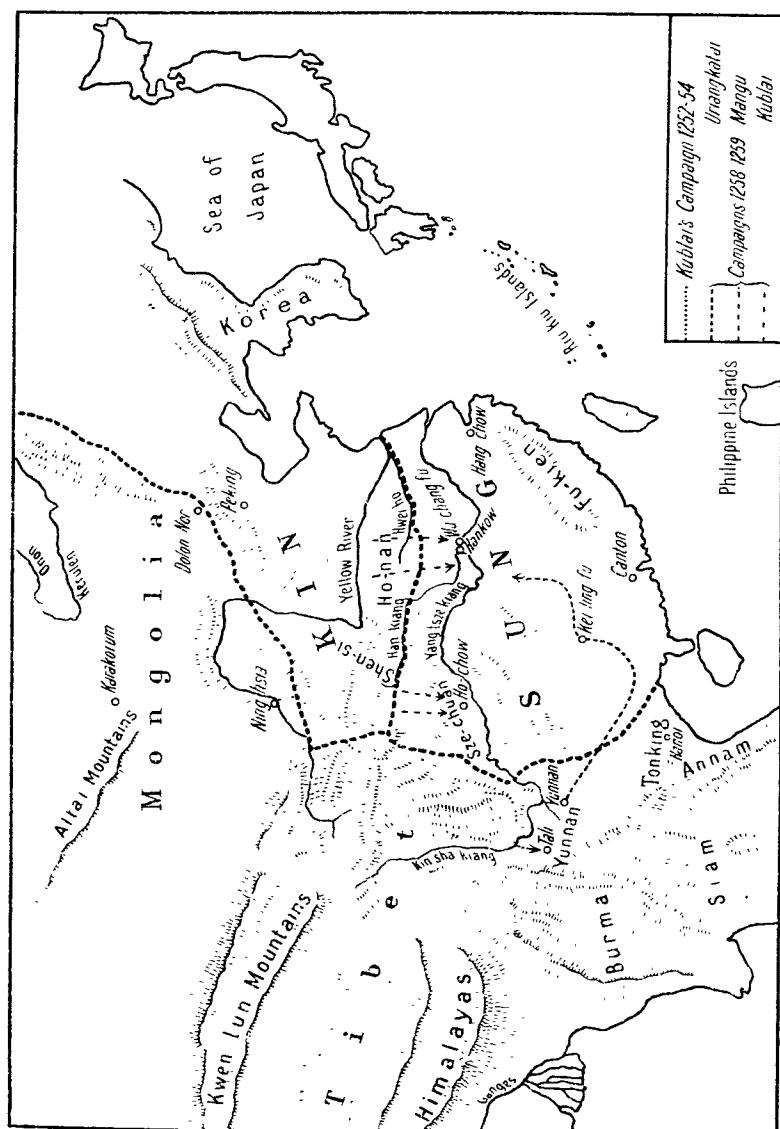
Kublai was sitting beside the camp-fire with his old Chinese teacher, the sage Yao-shi. Yao-shi told him about a legendary Chinese commander who had once taken an enemy town without killing anyone, and without a shop in the place having been closed.

Hardly had Yao-shi finished his narration, when Kublai exclaimed: "What you have been saying is a saga; but to-morrow I shall actually do it." He ordered his Mongols to unfold beneath the walls of Tali huge silken banners bearing the legend "On pain of death, do not kill!" And then he sent three officers into the town with a demand for surrender. The two commandants of Tali slew the envoys, but meanwhile the Mongolian troops, headed by the banner-bearers, had entered the city. They galloped through all the streets shouting: "On pain of death, do not kill!" They carried the banners into the markets and the squares, and never was a hand raised against them. No Mongol soldier and no inhabitant of the town lost his life—except for the three envoys, and for the two commandants whom Kublai executed for disobeying his command not to kill.

Then Kublai moved by forced marches on Yunnan, and when the King, seeing no other hope, surrendered, his life was spared, although he had killed Kublai's envoys—a crime which the Mongols had hitherto invariably avenged by the extermination of all concerned. The monarch was merely sent to Karakorum to pay homage to Mangu, after which he was allowed to return to his realm as a vassal prince.

The march through the mountains and the conquest of Yunnan had taken fifteen months. Now this region was in the hands of the Mongols, and Kublai returned to Kin, leaving it to Uriangkatai to establish a firm base of attack there on the farther side of the Sung Empire.

Uriangkatai marched back into the mountains on the Tibetan frontier, where he conquered forty tribes which had fancied themselves beyond the reach of any possible foe, and then he invaded Tonking, a dependency of the Sung, although its hothouse climate was deadly to the Mongols. The King of Tonking faced him at the head of a huge army. For the first time the Mongols had to encounter fighting elephants. Their horses were afraid of these monsters, and could not be induced to charge. Then Uriangkatai made his men dismount and shower flaming arrows on the elephants as these advanced to the attack.



THE CONQUEST OF CHINA

Driven crazy with alarm, the elephants no longer obeyed the mahouts seated on their necks, but turned and fled through the ranks of their own army, trampling both horse and foot into the ground. Now the Mongols charged the enemy thus thrown into disorder. The Tonkingese ran away, their king escaped to an island, while Uriangkatai laid the country waste, burned Hanoi, the capital, and massacred its inhabitants for having maltreated his envoys.

Of the 100,000 Mongols who had set out with Kublai, only 20,000 were left alive. Four-fifths of the army had perished in the field or from pestilence, but they had been replaced by native levies drawn from the conquered tribes and races, and the army was as fit for battle as on the first day. Mangu had good reason for satisfaction. His Mongols were what he wanted them to be, hardy and inexorable fighters, who spared neither themselves nor others, being precisely what they had been in the days of Jenghiz Khan. Only for a moment did it seem as if a new spirit had infected them, and that was when Kublai was in personal command.

Though Kublai was a bold and capable commander, his Chinese training had left its effects. His first step on being appointed viceroy in Kin had been to recall his former Chinese tutor Yao-shi. This worthy handed Kublai a memorial concerning the best methods of education. The memorial had eight paragraphs: the need for self-purification; for learning diligently; for honouring the wise; for loving kindred; for fearing Heaven; for having pity on the people; for loving the good; and for shunning flatterers. When handing over this memorial, Yao-shi, being a true Chinese, gave his pupil as guiding principle the following: "The focus of all countries and peoples and of all wealth is in the Middle Kingdom. O Prince, the cunning will try to sow dissension between you and the people. You will do well, therefore, to exercise power over the army alone, and to leave the work of government to your officials." Following this advice, Kublai devoted himself exclusively to the conduct of warlike operations, leaving the administration of the provinces

to Chinese civilians. He provided the peasants with seeds, oxen, and cows, while distributing military settlers as colonists throughout the country. It was in the like spirit that he had conducted his campaign, thus filling the Mongols with mistrust. By such measures, Kublai won the hearts of the Chinese, but he aroused suspicion at Mangu's court.

When, after his return to his provinces, he once more refrained from levying taxes, wishing to give the country time to recover from the damages of war and to allow the impoverished population to regain a certain measure of prosperity, Mangu recalled his brother. Kublai was to return forthwith to Mongolia. A new viceroy was sent to Kin, and the substitute's first step was to abolish Kublai's administration by Chinese civilians and to have all its chiefs executed.

The enraged Kublai wanted instantly to mobilise his troops and march against his brother, but the sage Yao-shi advised him to do nothing of the kind, saying:

"You are your brother's first subject, and must set an example of subordination and obedience. Send your wives and children to him and go yourself in person to offer him all your possessions and your life."

Once more Kublai was wise enough to follow sound advice.

As soon as the Khakan found that his brother was humbly and devotedly obeying his commands, his confidence was restored, and he forgot the accusations which had been levelled against Kublai. When the brothers met, there was a touching reconciliation. They wept and embraced one another. Mangu confirmed Kublai in possession of his fief; great festivals were organised; and while these were in progress it was decided that the war against the Sung (who had gaoled the members of another embassy) should be resumed and fought to the bitter end, in accordance with the maxim of Jenghiz Khan: "Whenever you begin a war, whatever happens you must fight it to a finish."

Mangu wished to take part in the campaign. Leaving his youngest brother, Arik-Buka, as viceroy in Karakorum, he made a pilgrimage to the sources of the Onon and the Kerulen,

to offer up sacrifices at the grave of Jenghiz Khan and invoke his grandfather's blessing upon the coming campaign. Then, from three sides, there began a simultaneous and concentrated onslaught upon the Chinese southern empire. Mangu advanced from the north-west into Sze-chuan at the head of three armies, took a number of towns, and began a siege of the key-fortress of Ho-chow, which was defended by the most approved tactical methods of the day. Starting from the north, from Ho-nan, Kublai invaded the Sung realm, conquering all the country northward of the Yang-tsze; then, having crossed the river, he invested the mighty city of Wu-chang. From the south-west came Uriangkatai out of Yunnan, marching north-eastward through the southern provinces, laying them waste and slaying wherever he went; then, turning northward, he took Kwei-ling and made for the plains lying south of the Yang-tsze. There was imminent a junction with the troops of Kublai, which would have divided the Sung Empire in twain.

The Yang-tsze, the channel for the life-blood of the realm, must be protected at all costs. Kia-se-tao, the prime minister of the Sung, hastened at the head of a large army to relieve Wu-chang and Han-kow; but instead of joining battle, he thought it more prudent to open negotiations with Kublai. He offered annual tribute in gold and silk, proposed a new frontier between the Kin Empire and the Sung, and even agreed to recognise Mongol supremacy over the latter.

At this moment news reached Kublai that an epidemic of dysentery had broken out among Mangu's troops outside Ho-chow, and that the Khakan had himself succumbed to the disease. His late brother's troops were raising the siege, and were preparing to return to Mongolia.

Promptly accepting Kia-se-tao's offers, Kublai made all possible speed northward to his provinces.

CHAPTER XIX

KUBLAI KHAN

I

THE law of the Yasak enjoined that after the death of the Khakan all the princes of Jenghiz' stock, wheresoever they might be, were to return to Mongolia, and there join in choosing from among themselves the worthiest to succeed to the throne.

But at the time of Mangu's death, the Khan of the Golden Horde, Batu's brother and successor Bereke, surrounded by sages and artists, was at the mouth of the Volga, busied with the foundation of a capital in course of reconstruction, New Sarai. The campaigns of his troops, which had once more devastated Poland and Lithuania and had been engaged in punitive expeditions against the Russian cities where Mongolian tax-gatherers had been killed, were of more interest to him than the question which of Mangu's brothers should ascend the vacant throne.

Hulagu, the Regent of Western Asia, having destroyed the Caliphate and having received homage from the Seljuk Sultan of Asia Minor, was in the act of conquering Syria, and thus establishing a realm which would extend from the Oxus to Africa. He did indeed set out on the journey to Mongolia, but since, as soon as his back was turned, the Sultan of Egypt defeated the Mongolian advance-guard on the Syrian frontier and killed its commander General Ket-Buka, Hulagu instantly turned westward once more.

Kublai gave his youngest brother, Arik-Buka (who had been left behind in Karakorum as viceroy when Mangu took the field against the Sung), to understand that he would only wait

until he had sent his troops back to their districts before coming to the kuriltai.

But the Mongolian chieftains had little confidence in Kublai. He had ceased to be a genuine nomad such as they were, thought only of his Chinese subjects and of how to avert harm from them, surrounded himself with sages; and, since he had overwhelming prestige as an adviser and as a military commander, there was great danger, should he appear at the kuriltai, that he would be chosen as Khakan. Assembling in great haste, therefore, they placed Arik-Buka on the throne. They declared that in this way they must be fulfilling Mangu's will, for, having appointed Arik-Buka viceroy in Mongolia, Mangu must have regarded him as the most desirable successor.

The answer was prompt. At Shang-tu near Dolon Nor, Kublai induced his relatives, the Mongolian generals of the armies in China and the Mongolian viceroys of the Chinese provinces, to declare him Khakan. Thirty years after the death of Jenghiz, the conqueror's law that the choice of a sovereign must be made when all his offspring were present, and that the appointment of a rival ruler should be a capital offence, had been forgotten. Wars of succession, which Jenghiz had hoped to prevent for thousands of years to come, were imminent. Two of his grand-children, both of them born while he was yet alive, were on the point of taking up arms to fight for the throne.

But this kuriltai at Dolon Nor had not merely appointed an anti-ruler. It marks one of the great turning-points in history, for it gave the Mongolian Empire a new trend, thus altering the destiny of Asia. Kublai was not satisfied with the election, for he knew that its legality was contestable, and so he had himself crowned as Son of Heaven by the Chinese princes, generals, and mandarins. Just as Charlemagne, the heir of the German rulers, had himself crowned in Rome and thus declared himself to be also the heir of the Caesars, so did Khakan Kublai, by becoming Son of Heaven, make himself the lawful heir of the perennial realm of the Emperors of China. Nay, he went

even further than Charlemagne, transferring his residence from the Mongolian steppes to China.

Never had the world's conqueror Jenghiz Khan dreamed, nor had Mangu (the last genuinely Mongolian Khakan) dreamed, that their successors would be Chinese Emperors, and would be enrolled as such in Chinese dynastic history. For what now happened was inevitable. By the removal of the imperial residence from its nomadic site into the huge and ancient city of Yen-king (until recently known as Peking, and now styled Peiping), Kublai shifted the axis of world-dominion. When the man who had been the Mongolian conqueror of China became Emperor of the Chinese, he transferred Mongolia, which had been the centre of the world-empire of Jenghiz Khan, into a mere military district, into a province of the expanded realm of China, and he subjected the Mongolian power to the service of China. This transformation scene was the victory of Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai over Jenghiz Khan, the triumph of the conquered but civilised Chinese over the victorious but barbarian Mongols.

The first effect of this election at Dolon Nor was a violent reaction on the part of the nationalist Mongols, who considered that their suspicions had been fully justified, and that their worst fears had more than come to pass. Most of the offspring of Ogatai, Jagatai, and Mangu rallied so vigorously round Arik-Buka that he immediately took up the struggle against his brother.

But now it became plain that Kublai's action had merely been the outward expression of a shifting of power that had already taken place. Arik-Buka was defeated by Kublai's Mongolian-Chinese troops. His capital, Karakorum, was wholly dependent upon its communications with China, and was simply starved out. The survivors of Mangu's troops who were still under arms in Western China, in Shen-si and in Sze-chuan, had, after a defeat, no choice but to evacuate the provinces, leaving them to Kublai. Arik-Buka, thrust back into the desert of Western Mongolia, with badly supplied forces which were short of food and whose horses were weak after the thin fare of winter, had

absolutely no hope of making a successful resistance to the well-equipped men of the Son of Heaven.

Feigning submission, he declared that as soon as his horses had recovered their strength he would come and pay homage. Kublai believed his word, and, leaving a detachment in Mongolia, sent the rest of the troops back to their districts. Then Arik-Buka broke his word, attacked and destroyed the detachment, and crossed the desert. Kublai got his army together again, put Arik-Buka to flight on the borders of the Gobi Desert, and forbade his soldiers to pursue the fugitives. "My brother played me a scurvy trick," said Kublai. "When he has time to think matters over, he will be sorry."

But the cunning and shifty Mongolian was in no mood for repentance. Collecting fresh troops, he began to struggle again and yet again; until, at last, completely exhausted, and abandoned by his own adherents because he proved so cruel to the Mongolian officers of the opposing army, he had to surrender unconditionally. Kublai, still magnanimous, spared his life.

But this did not mean the end of Mongolian resistance. At the head of it was Kaidu, Ogatai's grandson, the hero of the Polish-Silesian campaign during the invasion of Europe. He regarded himself as the rightful heir and sustainer of pure Mongolism; and it was typical of the change which had already taken place that his method of waging war against Kublai was in strict accordance with what had in former days been the way in which the Mongolian chieftains made war against the Kin Emperors. As soon as he had got together from the level expanses of Turkestan and from the gorges of the Altai (where his horde and those of his adherents were stationed) sufficient warriors and war materials, he would make a plundering incursion into Kublai's realm. Kublai's modes of defence, in their turn, were those which had formerly been used by the Kin Emperors. Just as they had shut themselves off from the barbarians by stationing garrisons along the Great Wall, so did Kublai feel no inclination for sending his armies into the desolate Altai Mountains. It sufficed him to establish a military cordon

round Kaidu's territories, and only to make actual war when Kaidu succeeded in breaking through this line. It was the traditional relationship of China to its restless nomad neighbours—with the only difference that now China's frontiers had extended to the Altai Mountains, and the incursions could no longer threaten the important centres of the realm. The Mongolians were not weaker than of old, but China under Mongol rule had grown stronger. Even when Kaidu succeeded, on one occasion, in gathering so large a force as 100,000 riders, he was intercepted and beaten before he could leave Mongolia; for his adversaries were no longer the cumbrous and slow-moving Chinese armies of former days, but Mongolian horsemen like his own—better disciplined, better equipped, and stiffened with infantry to make formidable fighting units. Whether in advance or in retreat, the infantrymen, armed with short spears and with swords, rode pillion behind each cavalryman. When it came to actual fighting they dismounted, and wounded or slew the enemy's horses, whose riders were then an easy prey for the mounted men of the other side.

Moreover, just as the Mongolian raids of earlier days had not prevented the Kin Emperor from carrying on other warlike enterprises, so also Kaidu's onslaughts did not hinder Kublai from continuing his great struggle against the Sung Empire. For the Sung prime minister Kia-se-tao had not negotiated with Kublai intending to keep the proposed terms, but only in order to cheat the "barbarians". The southern half of China had never yet been under foreign rule, and he was far from being inclined to recognise Mongolian supremacy. Hardly had Kublai withdrawn his main forces to the north than Kia-se-tao attacked and massacred a Mongolian detachment which had been left on the southern side of the Yang-tsze. In his reports to his Emperor, he described this treachery as a signal victory, and the withdrawal of the Mongols as its result! When Kublai's negotiators arrived to delimit the frontiers, he took advantage of the fact that Kublai was engaged in a struggle in Mongolia and clapped them into gaol. Thus did he shamelessly break the treaty, pluming

himself on being the saviour of his country though in reality he was paving the way for its destruction by challenging the Mongols and giving them a good excuse for a new war of annihilation.

Once more there appeared able generals who, like Sabutai, Jebei, and Mukuli of old, were able to lead the Mongols to victory in all parts of the enemy land. Though now in the third generation, the war-school of Jenghiz Khan could still celebrate its triumphs. Achu, a grandson of Sabutai, could take fortresses and rout an enemy in the field just as well as his father and grandfather had done; and the name of Bayan, commander-in-chief against the Sung, could rank with those of the ablest generals of Jenghiz Khan. Too late did the Sung regret their defiant attitude, the imprisonment of the envoys, and the murder of the negotiators. Storming all the fortresses, dispersing the armies sent against him, Bayan marched on Hang-chow, the capital of the Sung, the largest and finest city in the world, containing a population of 1,600,000 families. Like Venice, it was traversed by a network of canals, crossed by 12,000 bridges large and small, with streets so built that carriages and carts could drive up and down either side of the canal, while beneath the bridges big sailing-ships with tall masts could pass freely to the main centres of traffic. Thanks to an admirable system of storm-water drainage, the paved streets escaped being flooded even during the rainy season, and speedily dried. Stone buildings and towers in every street served as refuges and storehouses in cases of conflagration. The policemen were also firemen, and were so distributed that upon an alarm being sounded from 1,000 to 2,000 men were ready in a trice to fight fires in every district. On the door of each house hung a list of all its inhabitants, including the elderly and the children; and the hotels and inns must report to the authorities the arrival of every guest, specifying the day and the hour. There were pleasure-quarters, parks, a lovely lake surrounded by palaces, temples, monasteries and gardens, and on this lake boats plied for hire. There were numerous public baths supplied with hot and cold

water, and in these, as Marco Polo notes with astonishment, "all are in the daily practice of washing their persons, and especially before their meals." Such were some of the chief characteristics of the "Celestial City". Now, against this seat of pleasure and of joy, against what was probably the wealthiest market and seaport town of the thirteenth century, Bayan was advancing at the head of the Mongolian armies.

The Empress-Mother, who was regent for the seven-year-old Emperor, offered to make peace. Bayan refused to negotiate. The envoy tried to arouse the compassion of the "barbarians". Was it possible that the Mongols could be so hard-hearted as to make war against a little boy, and rob the defenceless child of his realm? Bayan's answer struck him dumb: "Does not the minister of the Sung Dynasty know that its founder also deprived a little child of his realm?" In the third generation the savage horsemen of the Mongolian steppes had become learned in history, without losing a tittle of their warrior spirit.

But with the spiritual change had gone a change of customs. No longer did the Mongol conquerors massacre whole populations, nor did they destroy the towns they took, but owned and administered them. When the Empress, in token of submission, sent the imperial seal out of the gates of Hang-chow, Bayan ordered a triumphal entry. His Mongols did not pillage, but on his orders his officers collected all official seals (the signs of power), works of art, books, and maps; and these treasures, together with the whole store of imperial wealth, were sent to Kublai's court. There was no talk now of bringing the prisoned Empress in chains to the conqueror's horde, as Jenghiz had conveyed the mother of the Shah of Khwarizmia into Mongolia. When the Empress-Mother wished to make the acquaintance of the Mongolian commander-in-chief, Bayan refused to enter her palace, saying: "I do not know the proper ceremonial." The rank of the ex-Emperor, the little boy for whom she had been Regent, must first be settled at Kublai's court.—The boy was assigned the rank of a prince of the third class.

Moreover, the contempt which the Sung had expressed even

for the Kin Emperors, stigmatising them as "barbarians", was no longer felt, or at any rate expressed, for the new imperial court in the distant north. When the Empress-Mother was informed that an escort had been appointed to conduct her and her son to Kublai, she embraced the ex-Emperor, saying: "The Son of Heaven has spared your life, and it is proper to return thanks." Then mother and son fell on their knees and kowtowed nine times towards the direction of the north.

But the forty years' war was not yet finished with the conquest of the capital and the capture of the Emperor. Southern China continued to resist. The ministers who had fled south-eastward into Fo-kien before Bayan's invasion, proclaimed the elder brother of the ex-Emperor as his successor, and the Mongols found it necessary to occupy town after town, province after province, which meant, in view of the enormous size of the Empire, a serious dispersion of their troops.

Owing to the scarcity of soldiers, Kublai had the prisons opened, supplied the prisoners with horses, weapons, and food, and pressed them into his army. Despite the questionable source of these 20,000 men, they furnished many distinguished officers. At length Canton, which was the last bulwark of the Sung upon the Chinese mainland, fell. They had nothing left but the fleet. Then the ministers embarked the Emperor and the remnants of his army on the ship, and entrenched themselves in the coastal islands.

A Mongolian fleet attacked these islands, a second squadron emerging from the Bay of Canton. After a naval action which lasted from sunrise to sunset, when night fell, sixteen ships of the imperial fleet escaped on to the high seas, but more than eight hundred fell into the hands of the Mongols. The imperial flag-ship was too cumbrous to evade pursuit, so its commander, having flung his wife and children into the sea, took the crowned youngster into his arms and dropped overboard shouting: "An Emperor of the Sung Dynasty chooses death rather than imprisonment!" Thus the Sung rule came to an end after it had lasted for more than three hundred years, and for the first

time in the history of China the whole Middle Kingdom was united under one foreign ruler—to remain a united empire until our own day. Throughout that long period neither conquests nor revolutions could disintegrate the unity established by the Mongolian dynasty.

II

Kublai was Khakan. He was also Tien-tse, the Son of Heaven. As heir and successor of Jenghiz Khan, he was Ruler of the World. As founder of the Yuen Dynasty, he was Emperor of China. China, Chung-kuo, the Middle Kingdom, was the largest and wealthiest country in the world, but it was not the world. Here was a gulf which could not be bridged.

Kublai's word as Khakan was law throughout four-fifths of the European continent. He was feudal suzerain of the domains of the Golden Horde. For his wars in China and Manchuria, he levied men from the Russian towns on the banks of the Dnieper and the Volga. Among his guardsmen were Alans, white men from the Caucasus, Christians. The realm founded by Hulagu in Western Asia, which extended from the Amu-Darya to Syria and whose frontiers marched with those of Byzantium, was a border province of his realm. Its rulers were given by him the title of the Ilkhans; and the coins minted in Tabriz bore his name. When Hulagu died and his son Abaka became Ilkhan, he refused to ascend the throne until the Khakan had confirmed his choice. "Kublai is our ruler," he said to the nobles. "How dare I mount the throne without his approval?" When performing his official duties Abaka sat on a chair beside the empty throne, until he received from Kublai a crown, a mantle, and a rescript formally appointing him Hulagu's successor, and commanding all the princes to obey him loyally. Hulagu and the subsequent Ilkhans regarded themselves as subjects of the Mongolian Khakan and not as the subjects of a Chinese emperor—although the Chinese annalists consistently described the Ilkhans as Chinese officials of the first rank.

For them Kublai was Emperor She-tsu, who had "unified China and established peace." The Yuen Dynasty of which he was the founder continued the work of the twenty-two dynasties of the Middle Kingdom. His Mongolian ancestors, who had been the fiercest enemies alike of the Kin and of the Sung imperial houses, were honoured according to Chinese ritual in a Chinese ancestral temple; for what, in this country which lived in accordance with Confucian principles, was even a conqueror of the world more than a "barbarian" when compared with the Son of Heaven?

Thus Kublai refrained from styling himself the Conqueror of China, and, succumbing to the ancient civilisation of his new realm, captured by its symbols and customs which dated from immemorial antiquity, gradually abandoned the national traditions of his own race to accept the age-long traditions of the Middle Kingdom. All the same, in his fabulously beautiful park with its splendid ponds stocked with precious fish, adorned with ornamental bridges, hydro-technical marvels, and other strange mechanical devices—the park to which he brought on elephant-back from all quarters of the world the strangest exotic trees with roots and some of the earth in which they had sprung—, one tract of land was planted with the arid grass of Mongolia that he and his sons might ever be reminded of the steppes from which they came.

He protected the sciences and the arts. Scholars, painters, poets, architects, and engineers were invited from all parts of the world. He completed the Imperial Canal which, of great length, was part of a system of waterways connecting the Lower Yang-tsze with the Yellow River, and serving mainly for the transport of rice to Peking. He built an observatory, and revised the calendar. Geometry, algebra, trigonometry, geography, and history received a new impetus. The dictionaries inaugurated by his command are still used to-day. He commissioned the writing of works on agriculture, horticulture, sericulture, and stock-farming. Two types of literary art, novel-writing and dramaturgy, acquired a new vogue in China during

his reign. Still, fundamentally he remained a Mongol, for it seemed degrading to him that the people of his original stock should have no writing of their own and were compelled to use a Uighur alphabet, so he instructed a learned lama to invent a writing better suited to the spirit of the Mongolian tongue.

While endeavouring to combine Mongolian with Chinese influences in his own life, he aimed at preserving the manners and customs of his forefathers, and yet he altered them so much that they became scarcely recognisable.

He was a true Mongolian in his love of hunting; but whereas Jenghiz Khan had only in the closing years of his life, and sorrowfully, abandoned the dangerous sport of man against beast, Kublai made it his pastime to hunt with cheetahs, semi-domesticated animals of the leopard kind, which were seated on the crupper of the huntsman's horse as he rode to the chase, and, at his signal, leaped to the ground and stalked the stags and the does in the Imperial Park. Every spring, it is true, he took part in one of the traditional Mongolian "drives", but not from the saddle of a Mongolian thoroughbred. Instead, he was seated in a wooden pavilion, a howdah carried by one elephant or by a pair, the inside sumptuously decked with gold embroideries, and the outside adorned with tiger-skins. From this luxurious retreat he watched his hawks swooping upon cranes, and looked at trained tigers running down and fighting with bears, boars, or wild cattle.

Like Jenghiz Khan, he had a hunting-tent made of leopard-skins, but it was trimmed inside with ermine and sable, and both wind-proof and rain-proof, so that the monarch was troubled neither by draughts nor by wet. Though he had a pleasure-house which, in memory of nomadic days, was substantially a tent, its roof was made of gilded bamboos, the tent-poles were gilt and painted with representations of the dragon of China; and it was so light as to be easily transportable. But the hundred silken cords which served as tent-ropes of this airy structure when it had been erected on a suitable site in the Imperial Park of the Summer Palace of Chang-tu were never unfastened.

Kublai also preferred the beverage of his fathers, koumiss, to wine or liqueurs, but his koumiss was made from the milk of specially selected, spotlessly white mares, of which there were 10,000 in his stables. Nor might anyone who was not of the race of Jenghiz Khan drink it. The cup-bearers who brought him bumpers of it had to wear a cloth in front of the mouth, lest their breath should besoil the imperial drink.

Each of his four principal wives had a horde of her own; though this horde was no longer a camp of tents. It consisted of a palace in which there were three hundred lovely virgins as serving-maids, with a staff of ladies-of-the-bedchamber, eunuchs, and pages of noble birth, so that the court of each empress comprised as many as 10,000 persons. He had many supplementary wives and concubines, but these were not the haphazard loot of his campaigns, being chosen twice a year by specially appointed officials after a review of the beauties of the provinces. Four or five hundred such maidens would be brought from each province to his court, and, after careful selection, the number would be reduced to thirty or forty. They were then handed over to ladies of the court, who had to watch them, especially by night, to learn if they had any hidden bodily defect, if they slept peacefully without snoring, and to make sure that neither through the breath nor from the body they gave off a disagreeable odour. Those who passed this severe test were divided into groups of five, and each group was at His Majesty's disposal for three nights and three days.

Across the whole realm rode swift messengers bearing fruits picked of a morning in the south and delivered on the evening of the second day at the Khakan's table, although the distance was more than ten days' journey for an ordinary traveller.

Everything about Kublai was so improbable, was such a strange and complicated mixture of Mongolian love of display with Chinese ultra-refinement, that hardly any other ruler in the world has been so apt as was he to become a legendary figure. Yet he ruled wisely and well. Scarcely had he finished the conquest of his new realm, than he began to master the minds of

his people. He preserved all that was best of the institutions of earlier dynasties, and tried to remedy the harm that had resulted from more than half a century of war. A census made not long after his accession showed the population of China to be 60,000,000, whereas a hundred years before there had been over 100,000,000. The wars of Jenghiz Khan and his successors had reduced the population by more than 40,000,000.

Well, the result was that each peasant had, on the average, double the amount of land, and Kublai was no niggard in the supply of cattle and seed. Year after year an army of officials traversed China to study the state of the crops and the economic condition of the inhabitants. Poverty-stricken families were given rice and millet, clothing and shelter. The elderly, orphans, the sick and crippled, received public aid. Kublai had homeless children collected and educated. Hospitals and alms-houses were established throughout the Empire. At Peking alone 30,000 of the needy were fed from the imperial kitchens. During good years the whole of the surplus harvest was bought by the State and stored in granaries, as a reserve to prevent famine prices during times of bad harvests. In famine areas the necessities of life were distributed gratuitously. Maximum prices were fixed for daily necessities. Soon prosperity prevailed once more in China which the wars had made hunger-stricken and had bled white.

Chinese junks traversed the seas, voyaging to Ceylon, the coast of Araby, and even to Abyssinia. By the land routes, Moslem merchants brought Persian and Arabian wares, Russian furs, and what not, to carry with them on the return journey silks, precious stones, and spices. China became a trade centre, and during Kublai's reign commerce acquired an unexampled extension, for the Emperor She-tsu was also the Mongolian Khakan who ruled four-fifths of the continent and preserved the unity of the Mongolian realm.

In Russia and in Persia, no less than in Turkestan and China, the Mongols built posting-roads and bridges, cut ways through the rocks, made the passes practicable, and established every

twenty-five or thirty miles a depot for change of horses. Here comfort could be secured, persons of rank could be housed as befitted their station, and, since at each post there were kept horses ranging in number up to 400, there could never be any cause for delay. More than 10,000 such posting-stations, with more than 300,000 horses, served for unhindered traffic throughout the mighty land. For the messengers of the Khakan, between the post-houses, on every road at intervals of three miles, there were subsidiary posts, ready to provide service by day and by night. The arrow-messenger wore a broad girdle hung with bells. As soon as the sound of these bells was heard in the distance, the best horse was got ready. The messenger sprang from horse to horse, and continued his journey, travelling from 250 to 300 miles per day. What European technique has only of late achieved in the matter of annihilating space was already effected in the thirteenth century in an almost incredible way by the savage energy of Jenghiz Khan, and the last touches of perfection to the organisation were given by Kublai.

Throughout the empire, the Mongolian Peace prevailed. For the first time in the history of our planet, Western Asia and China, Russia and Tibet, were no longer separated by impracticable deserts or by mutually hostile territories or by the complications due to perpetual warfare. Robbery and brigandage ceased. Mongolian military pickets watched the lines of communication; Mongolian officials at each posting-house took note of the arrival and departure of the caravans—and woe to the viceroy of any territory in which a caravan should go missing. There prevailed a condition of affairs which a contemporary chronicler described, in flowery language and doubtless with courtly exaggeration, as follows: "A maiden bearing a nugget of gold on her head could wander safely throughout the realm."

Thus Kublai Khan's fame spread over the continent. Vassaf, a Persian, writes: "Although the distance of our country from the centre of the Mongolian realm, the focus of the universe, the life-giving residence of our ever fortunate Emperor and transcendently just Khan, is more than a year's journey, the glory

of his deeds has reached our ears. His legislation, his justice, the profundity and fineness of his spirit, the wisdom of his decisions, his amazingly good government are—according to trustworthy witnesses, famous merchants, learned travellers—so enormously superior to anything which has hitherto been known in the world, that one ray of his glory, one particle of his stupendous capacities, would suffice to throw into the shade all that history has to relate of the Roman Caesars, the Arabian Caliphs, the Indian Rajahs, the Sassanid and the Seljuk Sultans.”

In later days, a Chinese chronicler wrote: “Kublai Khan must be regarded as one of the greatest rulers that ever lived. His successes were lasting.” This historian describes the Great Khan’s military achievements, extols his promotion of science, and goes on to say: “He thankfully accepted the advice given him by learned men; and he truly loved his people.” Kublai made only one restriction in this respect, and that was why, notwithstanding all his benefactions to China, the Chinese continued to regard him as a foreigner. “He never gave any Chinese a position in the government, appointing none but foreigners as his ministers of State.”

The reason was, that, despite his love for China, its art, and its civilisation, Kublai distrusted the Chinese. The Mongolian Khakan never forgot for a moment that with no more than a few hundred thousand men he had to hold a population of sixty millions under control, and he kept strict watch lest his subjects should have any opportunity of joining forces against him. When he had occasion to use Chinese troops, he stationed the southern Chinese in Northern China and the northern Chinese in Southern China, transferred regiments from the east to the west and sent men from the hills into the plains, changing the garrisons every two years. Chinese were only appointed to subordinate posts in the administration, all the authoritative positions being reserved for foreigners—Mongols, Uighurs, Tibetans, Turks, and Persians. But he was careful to see that these aliens should not oppress or exploit the people over whom they held sway.

One of his favourites, Ahmed, Minister for Finance, a consummate extortioner and exploiter, was slain by conspirators during Kublai's absence. When Kublai, after the death of the all-powerful minister, was informed about the deceased's misdeeds, he had the corpse exhumed, the head cut off and exposed on the pillory, while the body was fed to the dogs. One of Ahmed's widows and two of his sons were executed, the other relatives were punished in proportion to their share in his crimes, his remaining thirty wives and four hundred concubines were given away, and his whole estate was confiscated. Nevertheless, as Ahmed's successor, Kublai appointed, not a Chinese, but a Uighur, while the million inhabitants of Yen-king (where the conspiracy had been hatched) had to abandon the city and form a new settlement in the neighbourhood. Here the streets were wide, and criss-crossed one another (as in a modern American town), so that, "since one could see right across it from gate to gate," popular movements could be kept much more easily under observation than in old Yen-king with its narrow convoluted alley-ways. Each of the twelve gates was manned by a guard a thousand strong, ever ready for instant action. In the centre of the city hung a huge bell which was struck at nightfall, and when the curfew had thus been sounded no one might walk the streets before dawn. A person in urgent need of a doctor or a midwife, and having to leave his house, must carry a lantern.

Thus Kublai's tolerance had strict limits, and it was dangerous to transgress these. When he was informed that the Koran directed the faithful to slay those who did not believe in the Prophet, he sent for the nearest mullah.

The mullah, on being questioned, declared that such were the commands of the Koran.

"And you believe that the Koran was given to you by God Almighty?" asked Kublai.

"Yes, Your Majesty," replied the mullah.

"Why, then, do you not obey it?" asked Kublai. "Why do you not slay the infidel?"

"Because the time has not yet come, and we cannot do it."

"But I can do it," exclaimed Kublai, and ordered that the mullah should be executed forthwith. A terrible persecution of the Moslems was imminent, and was only averted when the Mohammedan dignitaries were able to find a great authority upon the Koran who explained that when this holy book spoke of "the infidel", it meant those who did not believe in any God ruling over mankind. Those who, like the Mongols, issued all their ordinances in the name of God were, therefore, not infidels, and the command to slay the infidel did not apply to them.

Another time Kublai forbade, throughout China, the slaughtering of animals in accordance with the Mohammedan ritual, having taken offence because certain Moslem merchants whom he had wished to honour had refused to eat dainty morsels of meat he had sent them from his own table. For seven years the prohibition remained in force, until the Khakan's finance minister respectfully informed him that no customs dues were now being taken at the frontiers, since the Moslems (who controlled the trade of Central Asia) would no longer come to China. Thereupon Kublai rescinded his decree.

For it was not only because he had no prejudices that Kublai was a cosmopolitan. He was swayed by practical considerations as well. The foreigners whom he attracted to his court had to serve his interests if they had a keen eye for their own advantage. Even as he inexorably and cruelly punished any who deceived him, so did he reward and promote those who served him faithfully, no matter from what part of the world they came. That is why, in Kublai's entourage, in addition to representatives of all the people of Asia, were to be found three Italians—the Venetian merchants Nicolo, Matteo, and Marco Polo.

III

In the year 1260 the two elder Polos, Nicolo and Matteo, took ship from Constantinople for the territories of the Golden Horde. At that date Bereke was reigning Khan, and, in accordance

with the custom introduced into trade by the merchants who visited Jenghiz Khan, they bestowed upon him all their wealth in the way of jewels and ornaments, and received from him, in return, double the value of the gifts and much hospitality. Since border troubles made their return unsafe, they continued their journey eastward from the Volga to reach Bokhara, where they were further delayed, for years, by the wars of succession that were going on against Kublai's and Hulagu's forces. Then they were given an opportunity of joining an embassy from Hulagu to Kublai, and were thus able to make their way from Bokhara to the court of the Khakan.

Kublai, who had never before met any Italians, held frequent converse with the two merchants, asking them many questions about Europe, its rulers, its political institutions, its armies, and its religions. Since the Polos were pious Catholics and children of their time, they took every opportunity of trying to convert this oriental potentate to Christianity. He listened to them patiently for a time, and then, being a practical Mongol, he asked them what he could gain by becoming a Christian.

"There are four great prophets who are revered and worshipped by the different classes of mankind," he said. "The Christians regard Jesus as their divinity; the Saracens, Mahomet; the Jews, Moses; and the idolaters, Sakya Muni, the most eminent amongst their idols. I do honour and show respect to all four, and invoke to my aid whichever among them is in truth Supreme in Heaven. . . . Wherefore should I become a Christian? You yourselves must perceive that the Christians of these countries are ignorant, inefficient persons, who do not possess the faculty of performing anything miraculous; whereas you see that the idolaters can do whatever they will." He reminded them of the miracles which the Tibetan lamas could perform in proof of their power. "When I sit at table the cups that were in the middle of the hall come to me filled with wine and other beverage, spontaneously and without being touched by human hand. . . . The idolaters have the power of controlling bad weather and obliging it to retire to any quarter of the heavens,

with many other wonderful gifts of that nature. You are witnesses that their idols have the faculty of speech and predict whatever is required.

"Should I become a convert to the faith of Jesus and profess myself a Christian, the nobles of my court and other persons . . . will ask me what sufficient motives have caused me to receive baptism, and to embrace Christianity. 'What extraordinary powers,' they will say, 'what miracles have been displayed by its ministers? Whereas the idolaters declare that what they exhibit is performed through their own sanctity, and the influence of their idols.'

"To this I shall not know what answer to make, and I shall be considered by them as labouring under a grievous error, whilst the idolaters . . . may without difficulty compass my death." Still, he was cautious, did not wish to do anything that might offend the Christian God, who perhaps after all was the more powerful, so he sent the Polos back to the pontiff. Let the Pope dispatch a hundred learned men to unfold the mysteries of the Christian religion, able to show the idolaters that they, too, could do such things, but refrain from practising these arts because they derive from evil spirits; let them compel the idolaters to desist from such practices in their presence. If that should be done, he promised that his nobles and all his subjects would be baptised, so that "in the end the Christians of these parts will exceed in number those who inhabit your own country."

But when the Polos got back to Europe, there was no longer a Pope. Clement IV was dead, and the cardinals were quarrelling about the election of his successor. Not until, after two years' futile delay, the Venetians had started once more for Eastern Asia, did they learn that the Conclave had elected their patron Tedaldo Visconti who as Pope adopted the name of Gregory X. Gregory recalled them for further instructions. But instead of supplying them with the hundred learned missionaries for whom Kublai had asked, he sent only two Dominican friars, who were by no means inclined to endure the hardships and the hazards

of such a journey, and turned back in Asia Minor. Instead of the priests who were to prove to Kublai the superiority of the Christian religion, the Polos brought with them only Marco Polo, now twenty years of age, son of Nicolo.

Marco was of an age to be greatly interested in the wonders of a world opening before his eyes. In a trice he learned the four languages that were in use at the court of the Great Khan: Mongolian, Chinese, Uighur, and Persian. Or, perhaps, he had already mastered Uighur and Persian during the journey, which lasted three years. He noted the way in which Kublai questioned his envoys, his army commanders, and foreign merchants, about the regions in which they had been, their people, their customs, their memorabilia; and how angry the monarch grew when these worthies found nothing to tell him. For this reason, having himself made a journey at the instance of the Khakan, he was able on his return to report every detail: how he had done his business; whither he had gone; everything he had seen. He was a shrewd observer and an excellent raconteur. Thus he was a made man. Without occupying any official position, by order of his master he travelled far and wide through this incredible world. There are no difficulties for the servant of an all-powerful monarch, and no doors are closed to his passage. Marco was able to see, hear, and learn more than any traveller before him, or perhaps any traveller since. He saw the golden pagodas of Burma; visited Ceylon, the island of precious stones; went to Java, the mysterious home of precious spices; to Hindustan, the land of the Brahmans; to the icy peaks of the Pamirs, and to the cannibal haunts of tropical Sumatra. He heard about the islands of Japan, the Zipangu of his book, and of the northern wastes of Siberia, where perpetual night prevails in the Arctic winter and where the Tunguses ride on reindeer. He became as familiar with dog-drawn sleighs as with the pearl-divers of the Indian Ocean. In the intervals between his journeys, he lived at Kublai's court, taking part in all that went on, watching the internal mechanism of this mightiest of realms, studying the private life of its sovereign, the "Lord of Lords, the number

of whose subjects, the extent of whose territories, and the magnitude of whose revenues exceed those of any prince that has ever before existed in the world." When Marco left Venice he was old enough to have had experience which enabled him to measure the pettiness of European conditions by the magnificent impetus which he saw in these gigantic Mongolian dominions; and he admired everything, admired the sovereign, the realm, Kublai's greatness, Kublai's power, and the unceasing tendency towards expansion.

For Kublai's envoys were still speeding across the vast spaces of Asia to demand homage and tribute from other potentates. The inevitable outcome of a refusal was a Mongolian invasion, no matter whether the country was separated from China by lofty mountains, boundless deserts, or wide seas. The demand for acceptance of Kublai's overlordship was issued by a Chinese governmental department in the name of the Emperor of China—for on this point, in the fixed determination to be guided by Jenghiz Khan's testament and to conquer the whole world, Kublai was a true Mongol. But now, when the centre of gravity of the Mongolian realm had been transferred to China, other parts of the world than those which had interested his grandfather became important to him. The West was too far away. In Western Asia his brother Hulagu was established. The empire of the Ilkhans was "a province outthrust into the farthest West." It was Hulagu's business to extend his frontiers in that direction, and once only did Kublai send 30,000 riders to his brother's aid. In course of time the realm of the Golden Horde became somewhat detached from the Mongolian Empire, so that it developed into a semi-independent though technically vassal State; and since the West was part of this fief, Kublai no longer felt interested in ideas of European conquest. His war-like enterprises were mainly directed against Eastern and Southern Asia.

The King of Cochin-China having refused to appear in person at Kublai's court and pay homage, a Mongolian army invaded the country and destroyed the capital, but the war proved fruitless,

for the inhabitants took refuge in the mountains, into which the invaders were unable to pursue them.

The King of Annam having refused to allow the passing of Mongolian troops, the Mongolians thought it necessary to wage war against him in a tropical climate which was deadly to them—although the King was willing to pay tribute.

The King of Burma would not send his son to Kublai, with the result that three sanguinary wars were fought against this country.

Then someone from China discovered the Liu-kiu Islands, to which a war-fleet was promptly sent. Another fleet sailed against more southerly islands, the Philippines and those on either side of the Sunda Strait. Thence Kublai received the tribute of ten kingdoms. His soldiers fought in Siam, in Hindustan beyond the Ganges, in Java. He cared little whether the conquests were economically profitable or not, whether the victories brought advantage or remained sterile; an unbridled love of dominion possessed him, and demanded satisfaction. He lacked the shrewdness which had always distinguished Jenghiz Khan, and the tenacity which Jenghiz had displayed in campaigns of conquest, the caution which had dictated his grandfather's disposition of the various schemes for territorial enlargement—and the inevitable result was that Kublai sustained some severe defeats.

A Korean scholar gave reports of the wealth of Japan which tickled Kublai's fancy, so envoys bore an imperial dispatch to the Land of the Rising Sun. The demand that the Emperors of Japan should accept Tartar suzerainty seemed humiliating to a dynasty which claimed to have ruled the island kingdom for two thousand years, so it was left unanswered. Thereupon an enormous fleet landed 45,000 Mongols and 120,000 Chinese on the Japanese littoral. The flats along the coast were laid waste, but attacks on the fortresses were repelled by the heroic resistance of the inhabitants. Nature came to their assistance, for a raging typhoon drove the invaders' ships upon the rocks, so that most of those on board were drowned. The troops who had landed,

being cut off from their base of supply, were annihilated or made prisoners and enslaved. Down to the day of his death, Kublai continued to dream of revenge upon the defiant islanders.

In Tokyo is a painting that depicts Marco Polo at Kublai's palace while the Khakan questions the Korean scholar about Japan, and many Japanese authorities regard the Venetian as the instigator of the Mongol-Chinese campaign against them. Although Kublai can hardly have needed any urging, the Japanese view of the matter shows how important was the Polos' position at the court of the Khakan.

They remained seventeen years in his service, and then it seemed to them time to get safely home with the treasures they had collected. Kublai was now a very old man; they were foreigners, doubtless envied and probably hated by many because they stood so high in the imperial favour. If they could leave before his death, they would travel under the aegis of the Khakan and with all the privileges and comforts of persons of distinction. But Kublai would not let them go.

Then chance came to their aid. In Western Asia, Argun, Hulagu's grandson, was now reigning as Ilkhan. His wife had died, and before her death had made him promise that her successor should be a girl of her own tribe. Argun, therefore, sent an embassy to Kublai requesting the Khakan to find him a Mongolian woman of his late wife's stock. Kublai made the required choice, and the girl had to be sent to Persia. In Central Asia there was a new war of succession among the descendants of Jagatai, and this would make the land journey dangerous, so the Polos informed their master that they knew of a safe sea-route. Marco had recently returned from a voyage to Hindustan made at Kublai's command; and beyond India by skirting the coast, one could reach the Persian Gulf.

In these circumstances the Great Khan "could not with propriety do otherwise than consent" to the Polos' proposal that they should escort the lady by this sea-route. Reluctantly, therefore, he let them go, on their promise to return as speedily as possible. But when, two years later, after circumnavigating

India and Ceylon, they landed in the Gulf of Oman, they learned that their departure had been aptly timed—for Kublai was dead.

The Middle Kingdom mourned its aged Emperor She-tsu, who, during his reign of thirty-four years, had made China rich and powerful once more; however, in accordance with Kublai's wishes he was not interred in a sumptuous Chinese tomb, but far away in Mongolia, near the sources of the Onon and the Kerulen on the mountain of Burkan-Kaldun, where his grandfather Jenghiz Khan, his father Tuli, and his mother Syurkuk-Teni had been laid to their last rest—having bequeathed to their sons the sovereignty of the world.

MARCO POLO'S MILLIONS

I

THE proud city of Venice, Queen of the Seas, found that her markets were being invaded by the aspiring Genoa. Her rule in the Eastern Mediterranean had been seriously challenged. The Black Sea, which in the first half of the thirteenth century had been a Venetian lake, was becoming by the close of that century more thickly peopled by Genoese argosies than by Venetian. Byzantium, at one time a purely Venetian market, came for practical purposes under Genoese control. Genoese settlements on the Crimean coast had become the chief depots of trade with the realm of the Golden Horde, and Genoese ports on the northern coast of Asia Minor were the main emporiums for Central Asia. So fierce was the hatred between these rivals that no commercial fleet could sail safely without naval convoy, and whenever Venetian and Genoese ships encountered one another, sea-fights took place.

At length the Genoese decided upon a crowning blow. They would attack Venice in her own waters. On September 7, 1298, a great naval action took place off the island of Curzola on the Dalmatian coast. The Venetians were signally defeated. They lost almost all their galleys, and more than 7,000 men were taken prisoner. Dandolo, the Venetian admiral, not wishing to survive such a disgrace, dashed his brains out against the mast of his flag-ship. Among the Venetians brought to Genoa in captivity was Marco Polo, who had commanded one of the galleys.

When, three years earlier, Marco, his father Nicolo, and his uncle Matteo got home from the Far East, the three travellers,

ragged wanderers who came knocking at the door of the Polo palace and, after long disuse, speaking their native dialect with a foreign accent, were regarded as cheats. The Polos were accounted dead, and their relatives now occupied what had been their house. What these foreigners knew about the family could easily have been learned from the Polos by impostors who had been their fellow-travellers on part of the way to the East.

According to Venetian tradition, the three travellers, in order to confirm the accuracy of their story and to avert further suspicion that they were humbugs trying to gain possession of an ancient mansion, organised a great banquet for the nobles of the Republic. As each course was served they appeared in new and yet more splendid attire, giving away to the servants the robes previously worn. At length, when the banquet came to an end and the domestics had left the room, Marco displayed the rags in which they had arrived, opened the seams, and, before the astonished eyes of the guests, poured out upon the table a medley of diamonds, rubies, and sapphires, such as no one present had ever before seen for splendour or quantity. The Polos, when about to leave on the return journey, had wisely converted their vast property into jewels. The display of so much wealth removed the doubts of the Venetian nobles, the travellers' good faith was admitted. People were glad to visit the hospitable house and listen to Marco's glib tongue as he told story after story of his travels and adventures.

It was generally agreed that he must really have been at the court of the Great Khan as had no other Italians even in these more advanced times when a brisk trade was going on with the Khans of Persia and of the Golden Horde; but it was felt that the wonders he related about Kublai, Kublai's court, and Kublai's realm made too great an appeal to the credulity of his hearers. Although people were glad enough to listen to oriental fables, the narrator was soon given, because of his supposed exaggerations, the nickname of "Marco Milione".

This reputation followed him to his prison in Genoa, and soon

the Genoese came in crowds to the Palazzo del Capitano del Popolo, to hear the entertaining stories of the much-travelled captive. A fellow-prisoner, Rusticiano of Pisa, who had the pen of a ready writer, was quick to recognise what unparalleled "copy" were these narrations, and, at Rusticiano's instance, Marco, while still in prison, dictated his *Livre des diversités et merveilles du monde* which was taken down by Rusticiano in the French tongue.

Meanwhile various Italian princes had been at work mediating between the two great republics. Peace was made, and Marco Polo returned to Venice. By now everything which he had previously related in fragmentary fashion could be obtained in black upon white, and had a remarkable effect—though not the effect which the author had anticipated. The palace of the Polos was nicknamed "Corte del Milione". At every carnival there appeared a clown called "Marco Milione" who, for the diversion of the populace, related fanfaronades. When Marco Polo lay a-dying in 1323, his friends thronged the sick-room begging him for the welfare of his soul to abjure the falsehoods that had been circulated in his book—until at length, in a rage, he exclaimed: "I have reported nothing but the truth, and that was not half of what I actually saw." Even though the subsequent growth of knowledge of the Far East showed that his descriptions and observations were accurate, and although he had indeed concealed many of the most amazing things he had witnessed (such as the Great Wall of China, printing, and the state of various industries that flourished in China), lest he should impair the credibility of the rest of his narration—as late as the nineteenth century Italian schoolboys, wishing to stigmatise some tale à la Munchausen, would exclaim: "Oh, what a Marco Polo!"

But there the book was, and people read it, whether they believed it or not. It was read as a pastime, by those who craved for adventure and by those who were curious about distant worlds, for such passions were gaining force in mediaeval Europe, and have never been laid to rest. A copyist echoes the opinions

of the time when he remarks that he made his copy in order to avert boredom. Even though much of what Marco Polo said might seem incredible, it was unquestionably entertaining. What Polo had written, said this copyist, "was not so much falsehood as miracle"; and though he himself did not believe everything, "it might after all be true."

Thus by persons in two minds about the story, the *Livre des diversités et merveilles du monde* was copied again and again, was translated into Latin and into Italian; with the result that mental pictures of a huge and previously unimagined world were conjured up. According to the prevailing geographical notions, the continents formed a flat disc surrounded by the ocean. Jerusalem was the centre of all lands, for had not the Prophet Ezekiel written: "Thus saith the Lord God; this is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her"? The distance from the extreme west, from the Atlantic Ocean, to Jerusalem must be identical with that to the extreme east. And in the extreme east was the Earthly Paradise, for had not "God planted a garden eastward in Eden"? The vast spaces that lay between were peopled with legendary men and women, or with monsters having human bodies but the heads of beasts; and similar horrors. People were, therefore, ready to believe any fantasy, any improbability. When Marco Polo, describing lands which he knew only by hearsay, spoke of the roc, a bird which could carry off elephants in its talons, readers were no more astonished thereby than they were by his description of a tiger. But when he spoke of the enormous extent of Asia, adding land to land, mentioning kingdom after kingdom by name, and declaring that in them lived reasonable and normal human beings who carried on trade and built cities—this was too much, and no European could believe such stories. Most incredible, most improbable of all did it seem that, on the farther side of the Asiatic continent, beyond the other countries specified, should lie the gigantic, fabulous realm of Cathay—this being the name given by Marco Polo to what we now call China.

It was not so very long since Europe had suffered from the Tartar invasion, with its cruelty and savagery. Then courageous friars like Carpini and William of Rubruquis had testified what a pitiful place was Karakorum, the residence of the Great Khan, had spoken of the savage customs of the Mongols, and how their intolerable arrogance was based exclusively upon force of arms. Were Europeans now to believe that there existed a just, good, and wise Great Khan, the noblest and mightiest of sovereigns, holding sway over a realm whose civilisation and splendours exceeded all hitherto conceivable? Were they to believe in towns with twelve gates surrounded by suburbs each of which was larger than Venice; in rivers where no less than 200,000 vessels sailed up and down every year (more than were to be found upon all the rivers and seas of Europe); in ships with four and six masts, manned by two or three hundred men each and carrying as many passengers, laden with thousands of baskets of pepper and other spices (the most coveted and most costly wares known to commercial Europe); and, wonder upon wonders, were they to believe in paper-money for which the most valuable things in the world, gold, and silver could be bought? Beside these alleged marvels the other things that Marco Polo had to tell paled. It was, comparatively, a trifle when he spoke of stones which were used for fuel instead of wood; of textiles which were cleansed by throwing them into the fire; of wine obtained by incising trees; of white bears and of lions striped yellow and white. Neither his account of the deserts of Persia and Central Asia, nor of the wild gorges of Badakshan, nor of the heaven-storming peaks of the Pamirs, nor his account of the lapis lazuli mines, of asbestos, and of the diamond fields, aroused so much incredulity as did his descriptions of China, its wealth, and its greatness.

The poetic imagination speedily got to work upon the great, the wise, the just Khan of Khans; and soon his figure was introduced into the compositions of every fanciful writer. But men of practice, too, began to adventure, though dubiously at first, into these distant regions: merchants in search of material gains,

missionaries desiring a spiritual spoil. And further news coming to Europe from the Far East served only to confirm in every detail what Marco Polo had written.

The Empire of Cathay really existed, and was really as great, as powerful, as extraordinary as Marco had declared. The Great Khans actually ruled it, being both hospitable and accessible. The missionaries were made welcome, and could teach any doctrines they pleased. They were provided with food and clothing at the imperial palace, and given the entry at court. Italian merchants, mainly Genoese, were granted licences to trade, and speedily grew rich in China. They provided money and land for the building of churches. Soon there was a Catholic archbishopric in Peking and an archbishopric of Zayton in the province of Fu-kien. Half a century after the death of Marco Polo, the Middle Kingdom was no longer legendary.

Two transcontinental caravan routes across Mongolia and the realm of the Golden Horde or across Turkestan and Persia connected Eastern Asia with the West, ending in Venetian or Genoese harbours on the coasts of the Black Sea.

Francesco Balducci Pegolotti's *La pratica della mercatura*, written about 1340, was substantially a guide to China. In addition to other important advice, it directed merchants to allow their beards to grow and avoid shaving; to be liberal in the payment of interpreters; to take a native woman as "house-keeper" at Tana where the Don debouches into the Sea of Azov, for "she will speak Kuman, and you will be better cared for." He also instructs traders that they will be able to make more money by turning over their wares quickly: "Everyone who wants to travel from Genoa or Venice to Cathay should take with him bales of linen, which he will be able to sell to advantage when he reaches Urganj. At Urganj he should buy silver ingots, and take these with him, for no matter how much silver merchants bring to Cathay, the ruler will always buy it from them, giving paper money in exchange, while he stores the metal in his treasure-house." Again and again he insists upon the incredible fact: "With this paper money you can buy silk and any other

wares you please, and everyone throughout the country will accept it; and you need not pay higher prices for your goods because you settle for them in paper money."

Tana, the Genoese harbour on the Sea of Azov, was the port of shipment for a flourishing commerce with the Golden Horde, and Pegolotti declares: "You might fancy that the way from Tana to Sarai would be less safe than any other stretches of the road to Cathay; but still, even in this part, if you are a company of about sixty men, you can be just as secure as if you were in your own house. The route from Tana to Cathay is perfectly safe by day and by night, as all the merchants who have travelled it report." Everywhere, in fact, a "*Pax tatarica*" prevailed.

II

A section of universal history had closed. A new nation, appearing out of the void, had written a page of human history in blood and iron. But now this first phase of Mongolian dominion, when there was no possibility of making terms with the conquerors (for subjugation or annihilation were the sole alternatives), and when heaps of human bones and piles of ruins had replaced proud cities, was definitively at an end. The "*Pax tatarica*", the Tartar Peace, whose price had been the destruction of twenty realms and the lives of dozens of millions of human beings, had fulfilled its historic mission of uniting the civilisations of the East and of the West—which had hitherto developed independently at the two extremities of the Europasian continent—into a direct continuum.

The history of our continent is not only, as we are apt to think, a history of an eternal duel between Europe and Asia, between the West and the East, although certain stages of this duel have characterised millennia; Greece against Troy, Persia against Hellas, the victorious campaigns of Alexander the Great, the desperate defence of Europe against Attila on the Catalannian

Plains, the offensives of the Crusades, the Mongolian invasion led by Batu, and the great counter-offensive which began in the fifteenth century and ended in the nineteenth with the establishment of the worldwide dominion of little Europe. The history of the Europasian continent is just as much (and even more) the history of the everlasting struggle of its two marginal territories against the centre, in which Central Europe plays the same role as Central Asia. The history of Rome and its defence against the Teutonic invasion has its analogy in the history of China and the Western Asian realms, and the incessant return of the Turkish races to the attack. Manchurian and Mongolian China, the Turkish dynasties of Persia, are the counterparts of the struggle of the German Emperors for Italy; they are the endeavours of continental powers to gain possession of the marginal regions. It was owing to their command of the land routes of commerce that the continental powers held a key-position. Thus it was that, towards the year 1,000 A.D., when communications between the trading centres of the Baltic and Byzantium became important, the new continental realm of Kievic Russia began to flourish. In like manner, four centuries earlier, under the Bu Min Khans, a Central Asiatic Turkish realm became established upon the great commercial route between China and Western Asia. In alliance with Chosroes, King of Persia, it annihilated the intermediate States, and then, turning against its Persian allies, it proposed to Byzantium a league against the Persians in order to monopolise the silk trade from China to the importing countries of Europe. Now, under Jenghiz Khan's successors, for the first time in the history of the Europasian continent did victorious Central Asia form an effective bridge between East and West, bringing marginal civilisations into touch. This was a unique moment in history. The Far East and the Far West came into contact, examined one another, formed economic, religious, diplomatic, and scientific relationships. Then, as was to be expected, the older and higher civilisation of the East proved more potent, and, stimulating and fertilising young Europe, aroused a new

cultural impetus destined to sweep away the shadows of the Middle Ages.

We are restricted to the works of a very few European writers for our study of the impression which China made at this date upon the Western world: Marco Polo, Giovanni di Monte Corvino, Oderic of Pordenone, and others. But concerning the amplitude of the relations of European sovereigns with the Mongolian court, we can adduce the fact that, during the first half of the fourteenth century, there were nine embassies from Europe to the Khans and no less than fifteen counter-embassies. Mongolian ambassadors came to Rome, Barcelona, Valencia, Paris, and London; while the reciprocal ceremonious receptions of these missions are but the outward and visible signs of the inconspicuous but much profounder reciprocal influence of East upon West and of West upon East. Many thousands of unnamed persons, snatched from their homes by the vicissitudes of war, were widely dispersed over the Eastern continent. They lived in Asia as slaves, as servitors, as independent handicraftsmen.

Carpini, when visiting Kuyuk, encountered a Russian nobleman who acted as his interpreter. Merchants from Breslau, Poland, and Austria travelled part of the way with him. At Mangu's court, Friar William of Rubruquis found a goldsmith from Paris and a woman of Metz. In Batu's mines, Germans from Transylvania laboured. As the decades passed, intercourse grew more lively, commercial relations more extensive.

Adventurers from all lands made pilgrimage to the East, incited partly by curiosity and partly by the desire for gain. Many settled down there, and not a few acquired wealth and prestige. Every embassy and every caravan which came by where they had settled was enriched by their experiences, helped by their knowledge. The thousands upon thousands who, accompanying these caravans, visited the remotest countries, were able, on their return home, to tell something of the new world and its wonders, and to display curios they had brought back with them.

While the two transcontinental routes were thus being developed, Europe was also taking advantage of the seaway to the Far East. The Ilkhans, who (unlike their Western Asiatic predecessors) remained tolerant even after adopting the creed of Islam, placed no obstacles in the way of foreign merchants desiring to cross Persia in order to reach Ormuz Strait, whence they could take ship to Hindustan, the Sunda Islands, and South China. An incessant train of caravans bore freights from Ormuz to the Black Sea and Mediterranean ports of Asia Minor. Chinese silk was obtainable in Europe at a price which enabled it to compete with the home commodity, while silk-producers learned by Chinese models and imitated them. Europeans made acquaintance with Eastern articles of diet and soon knew how to prepare these themselves. Italian macaroni is of Chinese origin. Oriental gadgets were adopted, so that the Chinese abacus is still in general employment throughout Russia. The Spice Islands, whence came pepper, ginger, cinnamon, and nutmeg, became known to the West. Indian muslins, cottons, pearls, and precious stones secured a ready sale in Europe. From Iran came weapons, carpets, and leather goods. Never before had Asia—so great, so multiform, so rich in various civilisations—come into such close touch with Europe.

Surely it is not to be regarded as a matter of mere chance that the Age of Invention now began in Europe? The Chinese had known of gunpowder for centuries; the Mongols had mortars from which they discharged shells; Franciscan friars were the first envoys to the Mongol court—and it was a Franciscan friar, Berthold Schwarz, who, in Europe, was accounted the discoverer of gunpowder. Marco Polo writes that pictures were among the luxuries of Chinese merchants; the first archbishops of Peking were Franciscans, and at Assisi, the headquarters of the Franciscan Order, we can trace plain evidence of Chinese style in the paintings which, in the fourteenth century, led to the Renaissance of Italian art. They were characterised by asymmetrical composition, a lively movement, and landscape in the background. Nay more, in a fresco by Simone Martini in the

south transept in the lower church of San Martino at Assisi, we actually see a singing Chinese in ecclesiastical vestments. One of the archbishops of Peking had been professor of theology at the University of Paris; and in Paris there was talk of founding a chair for the study of the Mongolian tongue. The Chinese had already used wooden blocks for the printing of books as early as the tenth century, and the first printing of a Chinese classical work dates from the year 952. The European block-books which began to appear in the fourteenth century were, just like the Chinese, printed on one side of the paper, the blank pages being folded into apposition or stuck together. Playing cards were in use in China by 1120; and the oldest European tarot cards closely resembled Chinese cards in size, shape, design, and number. In Korea from 1403 onward, the printing of books composed with movable type began; nor was this a new discovery, being merely an improvement of an older Chinese process. The Chinese used letters of clay, the Koreans letters of metal. Gutenberg was born about 1400.

The number of inventions in those days was legion. There is no reason to suppose that they were all deliberate imitations of Chinese models. The sudden mingling of civilisations had reciprocal effects. Chinese bronzes and ceramics of this period betray Western Asiatic influence in shape and design. Byzantine cloisonnés were exported to China, giving impetus, there, to a new art. In the Middle Kingdom, Indian artists founded a special school, which led to the creation of Buddhist statues in the Indian style. Indian numerals and Moslem astronomical methods made their way into Eastern Asia. Stronger still was Chinese influence upon Western Asiatic miniature painting and weaving, as also upon ceramics. It lasted for centuries. In Europe, too, which had surplus energies to dispose of and was particularly receptive to foreign influences, all the civilisations of Asia had their due effect. Mere imitations, or verbal reports passed on from one to another, sufficed to instigate European experiments. It was typical, and likewise symptomatic, that most of the inventions of those days were not made by learned

sages, by men of the study, but by unnamed practitioners, by persons who belonged to the common people, by professional handicraftsmen. That is why most of their names have been lost. Anonymously these inventions cropped up of a sudden, were improved, perfected, unexpectedly opening new practical possibilities—as happened in the case of the development of firearms. The beginnings of such inventions are shrouded in darkness, so that it is almost impossible to discover them, and we can only secure a conspectus of their results. Still, there can be no doubt that the mariner's compass came to Europe from China by way of Western Asia, and that Kublai's army officers, under the Emperor's instructions, looted maps to assist them in the conquest of towns; but it was not until a century later that the European spirit, in association with the science of geography and the demands of practical navigators, developed the art of scientific cartography which laid the foundations of the Age of Discovery and facilitated the rise of the modern Western world.

III

Because the will and the genius of a poor nomad had forced the savage Mongolian riders to emerge from their Central Asiatic steppe plateau, and, mounted on their unwearying shaggy horses, to overrun the continent hither and thither, shedding oceans of blood on the way, and burying the proudest realms beneath hecatombs of corpses—the civilisations of the old world were forced to make one another's acquaintance and mutually influence one another; the sciences were fertilised; new forms of art came into being; all the cultures and all the religions could develop peacefully side by side for a century; new and enormously long trade-routes were opened, and the world enjoyed an era of unexampled prosperity.

Till then, Europe had looked to the Levant for the satisfaction of her needs in the way of Eastern wares, and to Egypt for the

products of Hindustan and the Spice Islands. The jealous Moslems, especially the rulers of Egypt, took a usurious advantage of their monopoly, exacting no less than 300 per cent of the value of the goods as transit dues, while reviling and mishandling the Christian merchants. Now the Mongol Ilkhans re-opened to the West the Persian market which had been sedulously closed. Cairo and Bagdad were replaced by Tabriz as a centre of international trade. Merchants, irrespective of nationality and religion, were granted protection and safe-conduct in Persia. The road to the sources of wealth was no longer closed to Europeans. In the year 1315, the agents of the Genoese bank of the Vivaldi made an expedition of enquiry by way of Tabriz and the port of Ormuz to Hindustan; and five years later, Genoese counting-houses were established on the shores of the Gulf of Cambay and along the Malabar coast. These harbours were the termini of Chinese navigation, whereas the northern caravan-route led from China across the domains of the Golden Horde to the Italian settlements in Crimea. For the first time in history, commerce became worldwide in its circulation. The East had a great deal more to sell to the West than she had to buy; but, all the same, European cloth and linen from Milan were coveted articles in Asia; the work of Italian goldsmiths was highly prized; the glassware of Venice secured high prices; and coral found a ready sale as far away as China. All the countries which participated in this traffic earned abundantly, Western Asia reaping the main harvest, to which it was entitled, because it fulfilled its historical role as the natural link between East and West.

Thus world-commerce in the true sense of the word developed freely during the thirteenth century. This change was accompanied by a rise of the struggles for markets, the main European competitors being Venice and Genoa. But it was still too early for this struggle, too early for extensive world-commerce. Trade was outstripping the rise of technique and also the mental condition of the nations. Originated by an exceptional occurrence, by the unnatural and superhuman expansion of a people of

primitive horsemen, it could not endure. During the second half of the fourteenth century, the fertilising unity of the Europasian continent was disintegrated. The world of Asia, which had suddenly opened itself to Europe in its power and its plenitude without any initiative on Europe's part, closed itself once more, no less surprisingly than unexpectedly.

PART THREE

THE THREE REALMS

CHAPTER XXI

END OF THE EMPIRE

I

THE formidable unity which Asia manifested under the dominion of the "Pax tatarica" and which aroused both incredulity and astonishment in the disintegrated West, contained within it the seeds of decay. Jenghiz Khan's legacy to the Mongols had been a command to conquer the whole world, and for this end they had unified their impetus, and had dispatched armies into remote regions to conquer new territories and fresh peoples for the Khakan. But simultaneously this centrifugal force, which for three generations hurled Mongolian armies from the heart of Asia towards all points of the compass, had detached larger and larger agglomerations of people from their tribal home. The Mongols who settled down in the Russian steppes, upon the plateau of Iran, and beside the rivers of China, lost touch and sense of kinship with their primal fatherland. There was nothing to bind them to the exiguous conditions of Mongolia, its comparatively barren pastures, its harsh climate, and children born in the new, wealthier, and more beautiful home had not even memories of the country their forefathers had quitted. Nothing but obedience to their own Khan and his subordination to the will of the Khakan served to unite the Mongols throughout the world.

Mangu's death severed this last tie. The unifying will of the Khakan no longer existed. There had come into being the firmly compacted and almost independent realm of the Golden Horde; the Mongolian-Chinese Kin Empire, an admirably organised militarist State; and in Western Asia the still consolidating empire of the Ilkhans. These faced one another with equal rights. Each

of the "border States" of the Empire was already mightier than the centre; and when the tribal territory, which still regarded itself as the kernel of the realm and the guardian of tradition, raised a claim to universal dominion, it was only to find that the adjoining Eastern Empire under Kublai was ready to dismember it piecemeal and incorporate it as a province of China, while the two realms of the West preferred to hold aloof, since for these remote empires concern with the affairs of the centre had become a burden.

The huge space which Jenghiz Khan's iron will and the tenacity of his Mongolian riders had brought under duress, was now turning against its conquerors.

When the Mongolian armies originally set forth upon their campaigns of conquest, their only aim was to carry Mongolian weapons farther and farther afield until they reached the utmost ends of the earth. Following Jenghiz Khan's tactics, as soon as a country had been incorporated its men were turned to account for the conquest of the next, and thus, growing like an avalanche, they moved irresistibly onward. The conquered hinterland was denuded of men capable of bearing arms, and very small garrisons sufficed to nip in the bud any attempt at revolt. The army recognised one task alone, the ensuing conquest.

But conditions were altered as soon as the affairs of his tribal home aroused the attention of the Khan and induced him to return thither. The army was faced by new problems. The Mongols had to maintain their grip upon all the countries they had subjugated. But since each of the subdivisions was so enormous that it was hardly possible to enforce rule from a single centre and to maintain obedience to that centre, the army, as soon as the vassal princes with their troops returned to their fiefs, had to be broken up for the occupation of strategic points. The Khan who had gone to war as one of the commanders of the Mongolian Empire, became ruler of a conquered territory with his own peculiar cares and interests. No doubt he was establishing and organising a new realm, but these tasks necessitated a change of view, and actually endangered the troops

on the frontier at which the progress of the army had been stayed.

That was why, when Batu faced eastward once more after Ogatai's death, Sabutai, Jenghiz Khan's experienced general and comrade-in-arms, decided that Hungary, though already conquered, must be abandoned, and that Galicia, Silesia, and Southern Poland should be left to their own devices, so that there remained a broad zone of devastated country between the Mongols and their as yet unsubdued foes. When Hulagu, after Mangu's death, was ready to return to the kuriltai in Mongolia, he had no Sabutai to advise him to take any such precautionary measures, and he therefore paid dearly for his desire to obey the law of the Yasak. He left his general Ket-Buka with an army in conquered Syria, on the frontier of Egypt, to which he had sent a demand for submission; but as soon as he reached Tabriz, before his main forces had been distributed throughout the various countries of Western Asia, he was assailed by the news that his Syrian army had been annihilated by Kutuz, the Mameluke Sultan of Egypt, whose forces had inundated Syria. Thus compelled to abandon the idea of revisiting Mongolia and taking part in the settlement of affairs there, he set forth on a new campaign for the conquest of Syria.

II

Although to Hulagu this blow was no less sudden that it was unexpected, it proved no less disconcerting to the whole of Western Asia. His last advance, the destruction of the Caliphate, the Mongol conquest of Mesopotamia and Syria, aroused consternation in the Moslem world. The chronicler Ibn-el-Ethir writes: "Since the birth of the Prophet, Islam has never had such sorrows to bear. On the one hand we witnessed the devastations wrought by the Tartars in Azerbaijan, Irak, and Syria; on the other hand a second enemy, the Franks, were on the point of invading Egypt, and the Moslems had no power

to withstand them. The rest of the Empire of Islam was in danger of absolute destruction." It seemed as if the last hour had struck. All the faithful believed that the end of the world must be imminent. This Mongolian Khan had done what no one else had dared since the days of the Prophet, having laid impious hands upon the sacred person of the Caliph. Not merely had Hulagu destroyed the Caliphate, but had had the Caliph trampled to death by the hoofs of his riders. Yet no punishment had come from Heaven, no thunderbolt had struck him nor had the earth opened to swallow the miscreant.

After this, he could venture anything. No one believed that Egypt, the last refuge where the fugitives from territories ranging from Turkestan to Syria had forgathered, could find strength or courage to resist the terrible Mongols, the Scourge of God. All who could do so fled farther on, deep into Africa, or along the coast towards Tunis. Fear and horror, the deliberately utilised accessories of Mongolian tactics, ran before them like an advance-guard to paralyse the next victim. But on this occasion, where the Mamelukes of Egypt were concerned, the tactics failed for once.

The Mamelukes, slaves whom the Egyptian Sultans had bought in all the slave-markets of Western Asia and trained for war purposes to form a devoted body-guard, had, in course of time, become the most formidable power in the near East. They repelled the crusaders' attacks on Egypt, devastated Palestine with fire and sword, conquered the Syrian princes, and, from having been slaves, became the rulers of rulers. The Mameluke Emirs reigned in the name of the Sultans, deposed them and murdered them when they felt inclined; and when Hulagu, after taking Bagdad, overran Mesopotamia and Syria, the energetic Mameluke Emir Kutuz employed the Mongolian peril as a pretext for ascending the throne of Egypt in place of the heir to the Sultanate, who was a minor. When reproached by other Emirs, who favoured the old dynasty, he rejoined: "My one desire is to expel the Mongols. Would that be possible without a leader?" It is quite true that his

main endeavours were directed to preparation for the great struggle.

He had Hulagu's envoys, sent to demand his submission, executed, each of them in a different quarter of Cairo, to stimulate all to ruthless struggle, for it was the invariable custom of the Mongols to exterminate the inhabitants of a town where one of their envoys had been murdered. By a poll-tax, by confiscating entire fortunes, and by seizing jewels, he provided funds for the campaign; enlisted the Khwarizmian, Turcoman, Arab, and Syrian refugees under his banner; had every man capable of bearing arms enrolled in his army (those who hid from the recruiters were, when discovered, publicly bastinadoed); and thus got together an army of 120,000 whose nucleus was formed by the Mamelukes themselves, under their leader Bibars, whose name was dreaded throughout the East.

Bibars, a Kuman, who in boyhood had certainly fought under the Mongols, been taken prisoner by the Moslems, and sold in Damascus for eight hundred drachmas to one of the Mameluke Emirs, had distinguished himself by his valour, his skill in archery, and his admirable generalship. As colonel of the Cairene Mamelukes he had trained them in the Mongolian art of war, having thus, while still quite young, gained a victory over the conjoined armies of the Franks and the Syrians. This had greatly contributed to his renown. He it was who now stimulated Kutuz to resist, inducing him, as soon as spies brought the news that Hulagu had left for Mongolia to attend the kuriltai, instead of awaiting a Mongolian onslaught, to invade Syria which was under Mongol occupation. This was an unheard of act of boldness.

Ket-Buka, Hulagu's general, was according to one chronicler in command of 30,000 Mongols, while another declares him to have had no more than 10,000 men. Nevertheless, he made ready for the fray. At Goliath Wells, near Ain-Jalat, westward of the Jordan, a decisive battle was fought. So immense was the terror inspired by the Mongols and so irresistible was their onslaught, that the greatly superior Egyptian army retired,

apparently defeated. But Bibars had borrowed a trick from the Mongols, and, at the head of his Mamelukes, had ambushed himself in the rear of the Egyptian army. From this ambush, he flung himself on the pursuers, and thus decided the victory.

The effect of the Mongol defeat was overwhelming. Three decades after the death of Jenghiz Khan had come the first check to their career of triumphs. The tidings spread like wild-fire. At length the Mohammedans had inflicted a signal defeat on the reputedly invincible Mongols, and had slain their commander. The remnant of the Tartar army fled beyond the Euphrates.

The Moslems of Syria rejoiced. In the towns, the inhabitants turned upon the Christians, who had been protected by the Mongols, and began to plunder and to slay. Once more the Syrian principalities became dependencies of Egypt, Mameluke Emirs being installed as viceroys. Kutuz gave extravagant gifts and bestowed high dignities upon his adherents—overlooking only Bibars, whose generalship and boldness had won the victory.

Bibars had expected to be appointed governor of Aleppo as a reward, but the Sultan considered him too ambitious, too arrogant, and thought this promotion would be dangerous. Kutuz, however, made a mistake in slighting the Kuman. Bibars hatched a conspiracy, and, on the way back to Egypt, when the inhabitants of Cairo were preparing a great festival of reception for the liberator and saviour of Islam, he fell upon the Sultan and slew him. The Mamelukes, who idolised their courageous leader and boldest warrior, considered Bibars the most fitting candidate for the now vacant throne; and the populace of Cairo, which had thronged the streets to acclaim Kutuz the victorious, unexpectedly heard the criers in the markets and squares proclaiming: "Oh, People, pray for divine grace to the soul of Kutuz, and beseech Allah to grant long life to your new Sultan Malik-al-Zahir, Bibars the Conqueror."

Violent, faithless, crafty though he was, and the murderer of two Sultans, Bibars proved in fact the saviour of Islam. He was,

perhaps, the only man in Egypt to be under no illusion as to the actualities of power, and was not inclined to over-estimate the importance of his victory over the little frontier army of Hulagu. It was plain to him that the great struggle was still to come, so he had Damascus evacuated and all the women and children sent away from Northern Syria that more supplies might be available for his soldiers. The grass-lands surrounding Aleppo were set on fire, and all the country from Aleppo to Mesopotamia was laid waste, the bushes being burned and the trees felled, thus depriving the Mongolian horses of fodder, and their riders of shade and fuel, of shelter and the timber which they might have used for improving their equipment.

Being no less able as a diplomatist and far-seeing as a ruler than he was skilful as a general, while these preparations were going on he drew the utmost possible advantage from the extant situation. He fortified his position by installing a relative of the murdered Caliph of Bagdad as incumbent of a new caliphate at his court. This new Caliph announced Bibars' supremacy over all the lands of Islam and over all the countries which Allah would, in due time, free from the rule of the infidel. By these means the usurper was promoted to become legitimate Sultan of Egypt and Syria. Then, in every province, homage was sworn to the Caliph, Bibars' capital Cairo thus becoming a new centre of Islam. Being now rightful Sultan, Lord of all the Moslems, and protector of the Caliph, he felt that the time was ripe for an attempt to win the mightiest of possible allies, the Mongolian Bereke, Khan of the Golden Horde. For Bereke was the first Mongol ruler to espouse the Mohammedan faith.

III

While Batu was still alive, his brother Bereke's fief lay in the region of the Caucasus. Through this domain led the road from Derbent, on the western shore of the Caspian, into the

realm of the Golden Horde. This was one of the most important trade routes from Mesopotamia and Iran. The commerce was wholly in the hands of Mohammedan merchants, and Bereke was quick to seize his advantage. After his conversion to Islam, all the caravans were eager to traverse the horde of the Khan who had joined the faithful, and his wealth and importance swelled so mightily that Batu commanded him to settle down somewhere farther north on the Kirghiz steppes between Mongolia and the Volga, and forbade the merchants to visit him. But when Bereke succeeded to the Khanate, his Mohammedanism did not hinder him from protecting Christian merchants as well (the two elder Polos had visited him on their way from Constantinople); and he even commanded the establishment of a Russian bishopric at Sarai. He was a typical Mongolian in his tolerance of any creed that did not run counter to his interests.

But these interests were threatened by Hulagu's conquests on his southern frontier, for he would have been glad to extend his power across the Caucasus into the centres of Mohammedan civilisation. As long as Mangu was alive, Hulagu's conquests were effected in the name of the Khakan, and Bereke found it necessary to do more than accept them, for he was actually compelled to provide a force of auxiliaries. But after the death of his cousin Mangu, the situation changed. Bereke was now the eldest of the Jenghizides, and tried to check Hulagu's conquests by repeated intervention, and by complaints that the Ilkhan was too cruel to the Moslems. At length he withdrew his auxiliary corps, and that part of the force which was in Syria went over to the Egyptians.

Bibars was quick to avail himself of the opportunity. He received Bereke's Mongols with due honour, providing them with remounts, clothing, and food. Their leaders were made Emirs; some of the privates were persuaded to join the Mameluke guard; and he seized his chance of sending an embassy to the Khan of the Golden Horde.

This embassy brought splendid gifts to Bereke, the most

costly things to be found in the East. There was a throne of carved ebony and ivory; there were magnificent praying-carpet, curtains, cushions; woollen saddle-cloths, silver torch-holders; Damascus swords with silver hilts; rare musical instruments, enamel lamps. Black eunuchs, lovely girls, swift mules, dromedaries with their saddles and other gear, giraffes, wild asses, and monkeys were brought to Sarai. Most precious of all, the envoys presented Bereke with a copy of the Koran penned by the Caliph's own hand, and a turban which one of the Mameluke officers had worn when, in Bereke's name, he made pilgrimage to Mecca.

In a letter brought by the envoys, Bibars described Hulagu's campaign of conquest as a war of extermination against Islam. The murder of the Caliph at Bagdad and the taking of the city had deprived the Mohammedan world of its spiritual head and of its temporal centre—and all this had been done with a special animus against Bereke, the Mohammedan Khan. Then Bibars announced the re-establishment of the Caliphate; and, in conclusion, he told Bereke that, by his command, his own name and Bereke's would be mentioned daily in the prayers of the Moslems. The whole character of the embassy was most cleverly devised; it was the homage paid by a Sultan born in the land of the Kumans to the ruler of this land, and at the same time it was an offer of amity and alliance from one Moslem sovereign to another.

It achieved its end perfectly. For the first time identity of faith triumphed over kinship by blood; for the first time a Mongolian ruler decided to protect a foreign nation against another Mongolian Khan. When, a year and a half after the defeat at Ain-Jalat, Hulagu had reassembled his forces, and was ready to take the field for a campaign of vengeance against the Mameluke Sultan whom he wished to drive out of Syria and out of Egypt as well, Bereke's troops were under arms in Caucasia ready to invade the Ilkhan's realm. "In the winter of 1262, when the Almighty Goldsmith had covered the river of Derbent with silver plates and King Winter the Furrier had

clothed the hills and the heathlands with ermine, when the river to the depth of a spear was frozen as hard as stone, an army of Mongols under the command of Bereke Khan—filthy as demons, devils for savagery, and numerous as the falling rain-drops—rolled in waves across the frozen river with the speed of the wind and of fire. The rattling of their chariots and the clashing of their horses' hoofs were like thunder and lightning. With their wrath in full flame, they advanced," writes Vassaf, the chronicler. And Hulagu, instead of marching south-westward against the Mamelukes, had to march northward against men of his own blood.

At the very time when Kublai's Mongols were making war upon the Mongols of Arik-Buka in the border regions of the Gobi Desert, Hulagu's Mongols were fighting those of Bereke. Throughout the whole breadth of Asia, Mongol was arrayed against Mongol, Jenghizide against Jenghizide.

Jenghiz Khan's iron will had made a nation out of nothing, had metamorphosed loose aggregates of nomads into the best disciplined army of the thirteenth century, had transformed savage warriors into the most distinguished commanders and strategists in the world. It was his will which had shattered twenty realms, had overrun inconceivable areas, bridged the largest of the continents, and converted herdsmen of the steppes into rulers of all the peoples and all the civilisations. In only one respect had this will failed to achieve its purpose. Jenghiz could not alter the character of his Mongols. Fratricidal warfare had prevailed for ages in Mongolia, dissipating the forces of the country; now it prevailed over the whole Asiatic continent. It was not the losses sustained in unceasing campaigns of conquest, it was not the extension of the Mongolian people until it spread thinly over such vast spaces, which had undermined its energies. It had become steadily greater and greater, and in these vast spaces its numbers had been many times multiplied. The weak spot was internal dissension. This it was that wrecked Jenghiz Khan's work.

Futile had been his exhortations to unity, vain had been

his parables of the arrows and of the snake with many heads which, on his death-bed, he related to his sons; vain, too, had been the law of the Yasak, to the effect that everything which impaired the central authority should be an offence punishable with death. For one generation only was unity maintained, though he had believed it cemented for a thousand years. Already in the second generation unceasing quarrels began. Theft, poisoning, assassination by violence had again become daily incidents as among the nomad chiefs before the time of Jenghiz Khan, until open war broke out between the sons of his four sons, and at length, in each fragment of the Empire, a ruler could only ascend the throne over the corpses of other aspirants.

IV

After gaining the victory over Arik-Buka, Kublai was able to put an end to the war between the two western Khanates; but although both Bereke and Hulagu had recognised him as Khakan, it was not his mere word of power which stopped the annual winter combats between the rivals. Kublai sent an army of 30,000 Mongol warriors to Hulagu's aid, whereupon Bereke abandoned his attempt to extend his dominion southward from Derbent.

In two generations, the position of the Khakan had been modified. Jenghiz Khan was Ssutu-Bogdo, the God-sent; and his word was Heaven's will. His successors retained the title, but they were only sovereigns elected by the kuriltai, and ultimately the legal elections passed into abeyance. Jenghiz Khan had regarded the rule of the nomads over the civilised nations as a God-given destiny. Though he would turn their civilisation to account, he would do so without himself undergoing any alteration; and he tolerated all religions because all were indifferent to him. His successors adopted the civilisation of the conquered peoples; in accordance with their own mental leanings, influenced by their wives, or to gain advantage, they preferred this or that

religion, proclaimed themselves converts; and each of them, whether Mohammedan, Nestorian, or Buddhist, regarded Shamanism with contempt. How could Bereke, a Moslem, possibly look upon the words of Kublai the Khakan as the will of Allah? How could the later Ilkhans, when Kublai and his successors were converted to Buddhism, believe them to be Ssutu-Bogdo, the God-sent? The decrees of the Khakan were only respected when they did not conflict with their own interests, or when he could make them respected by force.

The Khakan's sphere of influence had been transposed by the removal of the capital from Karakorum to Peking. Kublai's aim had been to unite the centre of power with the centre of civilisation; but in substance he had transferred the axis of empire eastward to the periphery. When the original tribal home of the Mongols became an unimportant province of the Chinese Empire, the centre of gravity had shifted, and the lands of the West, with different civilisations from the Chinese and a different history, were thrust into the far distance. The differences that arose between the western Khanates could not be subordinated to the interests of a united empire with its capital in China.

There was a rift in the mighty empire. The thought of a Mongolian unity bridging all opposition had lost its power. Although the trend towards expansion and conquest persisted in all parts of the vast realm, the Mongolian nimbus had vanished. The three parts of the empire had to live their own lives, to conduct their own wars, and had therefore descended to the level of ordinary great powers. They were compelled to study the arts of policy, to cultivate alliances, to reckon with the peculiarities of conquered populations. Henceforward each of the three great Mongolian khanates had a history of its own.

CHAPTER XXII

THE REALM OF THE ILKHANS

I

THE fate of the realm of the Ilkhans was decided by its enemy, Islam. As soon as Bibars the Mameluke Sultan and Bereke the Khan of the Golden Horde had come to an understanding, Hulagu and his successors were faced by Mohammedans on all their frontiers, on the Euphrates, in the Caucasus, and on the Oxus. The followers of the Prophet surrounded the domain and paralysed its energies. Any success on one border was more than undone by increased pressure on the others, and superadded was the stubborn resistance of the Moslem subjects of the Ilkhans—which from time to time passed from the passive form to the active form of revolt.

While Hulagu was warding off Bereke's invasion in the north, Sultan Bibars completed the organisation of his Mameluke army after the Mongolian model. He could trust this army, which was strongly disciplined and admirably trained, composed of men who had been brought together from immense distances and whose only home was now the barrack or the camp, so that they were bound together by like prospects and an exceptionally vigorous *esprit de corps*. It finished the reconquest of Syria, thus occupying what had been the Mediterranean border of the Western Asiatic Khanate. This was firmly held in Egyptian grip, and the Mamelukes were already reaching out into Asia Minor, and threatening Armenian towns.

By the time when Hulagu was ready to take the field against Bibars, it was too late, for he had to face an enemy nowise his inferior. Every troop of the Egyptian forces contained Mongolian instructors sent by the Golden Horde. The dream of

the conquest and subjugation of Egypt was over. The struggles which now went on concerned only the possession of this or that fragment of Syria, this or that town. The empire of the Ilkhans was confined within fixed frontiers. An end had come to the expansile tendency of all previous Mongolian realms—the tendency which had continually reanimated their energies.

The Ilkhans were the first Mongolian rulers who could not conquer their enemies with unaided strength, and therefore were forced to seek allies. In the conquest of Western Asia they had, following their usual rule, relied upon elements of the population hostile to the ruling classes. These were the Nestorian Christians. Also there had developed a measure of friendship between them and the Christian vassal realms of Asia Minor—the Armenians, for instance. It was natural, therefore, that they should seek allies in the Christian West, in the supreme head of Christendom, the Pope, who, as their Armenian friends informed them, had for centuries been sending European armies against Egypt.

Hulagu's son and successor Abaka was the first Ilkhan to dispatch an embassy to the Pope, and his message had a very different ring from Kuyuk's or Mangu's arrogant demands for submission. He proposed to His Holiness an alliance against Egypt. That country was to be attacked from two sides, by the Mongols and the Crusaders, and could then be annihilated. The plan was unquestionably practicable. The Pope gave it a favourable hearing and sent the envoys farther afield, to France, England, and Spain. They secured a certain measure of success. Louis of France (later canonised), James of Aragon, two English princes, and Charles of Anjou (who, after the death of the last of the Hohenstaufens, became King of Sicily), declared themselves ready for a new crusade.

But the Mameluke Sultan Bibars was too skilful a diplomatist not to recognise and guard against the danger that threatened. After taking Antioch, Jaffa, Belfort, and a number of other strongholds from the French in Syria, he thought it advisable to come to an understanding with the Christian powers of the

West; and—since the transcontinental routes of commerce were not yet opened, and the trade with Egypt (especially the spice trade, which went through Egyptian ports) was one of the greatest sources of wealth for the Mediterranean powers—he found it easy to win over Venice and Sicily. The two nearest Mediterranean powers had no further interest in the overthrow of the Mameluke realm, and tried to give a new turn to the Crusade. Venice would have been glad to have another smack at Byzantium, which was friendly to Genoa; but Michael Paleologus, Emperor of Byzantium, had also taken time by the forelock and safeguarded himself in all directions. One of his daughters was wife of the Ilkhan; another was married to Nogai, the mighty viceroy of the Khan of the Golden Horde, who held sway over the South Russian steppes and the Balkans; while with Bibars, Michael was united by a treaty of friendship which gave the Mameluke Sultan free transit through Byzantium for slaves from the Crimea—one of the main centres of the slave trade. Venice had her settlements in all three realms, would have been most unwilling to quarrel with any of them, and therefore had no objections when Charles of Anjou wanted to divert the Crusade to his own ends. The Bey of Tunis was in debt to him for tribute, and he managed to secure that the campaign should be primarily directed against Tunis. The attack on the Mameluke Empire, which had been planned to be simultaneous, never took place. The crusading army was smitten by pestilence during the siege of Tunis. King Louis of France died, and his death ended the era of the Crusades. Far from being destroyed, Egypt had now leisure to wrest from the crusaders their last positions in the Holy Land.

After the failure of the attempt at an alliance, Hulagu's second son, Tagudar, tried a new way. He went over to Islam, adopted the name of Ahmed, and wanted to make peace with the Mohammedan world. But Egypt was by no means inclined, for the sake of a converted Khan, to renounce the possibility of further conquests in Asia Minor; and even though the Moslem population of Western Asia was jubilant on account of Tagudar's

conversion, the other princes of the house of Hulagu were not in accord with the policy of the third Ilkhan, which estranged them from their natural allies, the oriental Christians, and led to the persecution (in order to secure the approval of despised townsmen) of those Mongolian chieftains who had remained true to their ancestral faith. Abaka's son Argun complained to Kublai that his uncle Ahmed "had abandoned the ways of their forefathers, and had accepted the law of the Arabs"; and the disapproval of the Khakan still meant so much in the realm of the Ilkhans that ten Mongolian princes and sixty generals joined Argun in a revolt. Ahmed was defeated and killed.

Argun revived the idea of an alliance with the West, and envoys from the Ilkhans once more visited European courts. He promised the Christians the Holy Land, and declared that as soon as they had conquered Jerusalem he would have himself baptised there. The Pope sent the envoys on to Philip the Fair of France and to Edward I of England. But the mission was fruitless. Western Europe was no longer interested in crusading adventures. It failed to recognise that here was a great oriental potentate offering assistance for the achievement of an aim for which Europe had vainly been fighting for two centuries; nor did anyone in Europe seem to understand how important the disintegration of Islam would be for the whole future development of the western continent. The great opportunity was missed. The upshot was that, while Europe was wholly concerned with its own quarrels, time was given to Islam for the re-consolidation of its forces, and the path was smoothed for the subsequent conquest of Constantinople.

II

By this date, towards the close of the thirteenth century, the Mongols of Western Asia had long since lost the savage and ruthless lust for conquest which had inspired their forefathers.

The Ilkhans had become civilised rulers, building towns, promoting commerce, cultivating the sciences and the arts. They liked to surround themselves with scholars, to build observatories and schools, to be alchemists who were in search of the Philosophers' Stone and were studying the secrets of nature.

Nevertheless they and their Mongol warriors remained aliens in the land, nourished by consuming and exploiting the energies of the people. They were a warrior caste, habituated to battle and plunder. When their empire had acquired fixed boundaries, beyond which they could not seek loot from new and ever new enemies, they compelled their subjects to hand over to them without return all that contributed to an easy and comfortable life. "They taxed the craftsmen who worked in the towns and villages, they taxed the fishermen who drew sustenance from the lakes and the rivers, they taxed the mines and the dyeworks and the weaving establishments," complains a chronicler. Poll-taxes, taxes on industry and other occupations, taxes on cattle, were a heavy burden upon the land; each new vizier discovered some fresh source of income to gratify the extravagant tastes of the Khan. Even worse than these legally prescribed taxes were the illegitimate exactions of the viceroys, the farmers of the revenue, and the commandants of the troops.

Being fully occupied by gentlemanly amusements, by battle and hunting, by festivals, and by the repression of perpetual revolts, the Khans had no time to bother themselves about the work of government, and left such matters to their favourites. There was a very rapid succession of occupants to the throne. During the three decades after the death of Hulagu there were no less than five Ilkhans, who died of poison, of the illnesses that resulted from alcoholism or other excesses, or simply through murder. Meanwhile the power of the chieftains who ruled the provinces as Emirs and viceroys was continually growing. These short-lived Khans could not take long views. They had to get speedily to work if they wished to make a

name for themselves, and since this could no longer be achieved by conquest, it must be achieved by the glory and splendour of their courts, or by the building of palaces and mosques. Cities sprang up like mushrooms in honour of the ruling Khan, most of them remaining unfinished, and falling speedily into decay. Armies of handicraftsmen would be assembled for the purpose, the industrial population of neighbouring cities being transferred—then the Khan would perish, and of the intended glory nothing would remain but a heap of ruins. At length such ruined cities surrounded by land which had gone out of cultivation stretched in an almost uninterrupted chain from the Oxus into the Syrian Desert. There were many towns, but scarcely one house in ten was inhabited. Large sums were thus squandered, and in their need for money the Khans would grant anything to favourites who would help them “to raise the wind”. The chronicler writes: “Whoever comes to them bringing gifts secures the office that he covets, no matter whether he be fitted to hold it or not.” The results of this system were a brilliant court and an impoverished population; a blossoming of art, science, literature, and architecture, but the pauperisation of the country.

One of the Ilkhans, Kaikhatu, aspired to outclass the fame of Ogatai as the most magnanimous and liberal of rulers, and therefore squandered all his revenues, all the tribute and gifts he received, upon his mistresses, his courtiers, and his officers, so that, ere long, his treasury was empty. In order to refill it, someone was struck by the bright thought of printing paper money after the Chinese fashion. It was to be issued in Tabriz, the capital, but then it was thought desirable to establish a note-bank in every province. The use of coined money was prohibited, and the Khan was assured that as soon as the paper money passed into circulation poverty would be unknown throughout the realm. In advance the poets lavished praises on him and his great deed.

September 12, 1294, was the memorable day on which the first issue of paper money took place in Tabriz. Criers were

sent through the streets to announce that anyone who refused to accept it, anyone who should buy or sell except for paper money, and anyone who failed to bring such coin as he had to the bank and exchange it there for paper money, would be put to death. The notes bore the pious utterance: "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His Prophet." Also the name of the Khan, a specification of the value, and the statement that anyone who should counterfeit the notes would be put to death with his wives and children and that the whole of his property would be confiscated.

For a week the commands were obeyed, lest punishment should befall. Then the shops and the markets were empty; there was nothing more to be bought in the town; and the people began to run away. The famine-stricken citizens raided and plundered the gardens of the environs. When, one day, the Khan rode through the bazaar and expressed his wonder that no one was buying or selling and the shops were closed, the vizier who had introduced the new paper money informed him that one of the elders of the city had died, and that it was an old custom among the burghers to close the bazaar on such occasions. Next Friday, loud lamentations were uttered in the mosques, and the troops had to be called out to restrain the populace from excesses. Sellers were asking for a horse worth seven-and-a-half gold pieces a hundred times as much in inflated paper currency.

After several attempts had been made upon the lives of the vizier and other high officials, a decree was issued that the more immediate necessities of life could be paid for in hard cash; then this privilege was extended to other goods; and after two months, during which trade had been stagnant and the shops empty, because no trader offered anything for sale, the paper currency vanished for ever, leaving no trace beyond lampoons deriding the innovation and the wiseacres who had devised it.

Only one province, which was ruled by Prince Ghazan (Hulagu's great-grandson) as viceroy, was spared the blessing

of paper money. When the paper and the presses were brought to him for his use, he sent a message to the Ilkhan, his uncle, to the effect that in that part of the country the climate was very damp, and that if he should print banknotes as directed they would soon become no thicker than a cobweb. He ordered the paper and the presses to be committed to the flames.

After a time this same Ghazan became the seventh Ilkhan, in whom the much-afflicted country at length secured an able and vigorous ruler.

III

Since Ahmed had paid with his life for his ill-conceived attempt to come to terms with Islam, only ten years had elapsed, but conditions throughout the country had completely altered. More and more Mohammedans had risen to commanding positions, more and more of the Mongol nobles had gone over to the faith of the Prophet; the relations with China, the realm of the Khakan, had grown progressively less intimate; and while the other chieftains, split into numerous tribes, were at odds with one another, the Mohammedans stuck together, so that they formed one of the strongest parties in the State and could furthermore count upon the support of the native population and the imams. This Mohammedan party rallied around Ghazan, induced him to become a Moslem, and raised him to the throne. The first four years of his reign were occupied in the persecution of the Christians and the Jews and the destruction of churches and synagogues; but as soon as his authority was sufficiently established, he returned to the traditional Mongolian policy of toleration in religious matters. An edict commanded all his subjects to live at peace one with another, and forbade the great to oppress underlings. When he learned that in one district the troops had been disorderly, he had the non-commissioned officers bastinadoed and administered harsh reproofs to the generals. "I am enraged at your plundering the inhabit-

ants," he said. "But what were you about when you slaughtered the cattle and trampled the crops? I suppose you thought you could come to me and ask me for food? If you did so, I should only punish you."

Under Ghazan the regime of the emirs and viziers came to an end. He ruled in person, receiving embassies and supervising the administration. Since, after the manner of the Mongols, he was a heavy drinker, he forbade his officials and friends to talk to him about business on festal occasions, or to voice any suspicions at such times.

To check illegal exactions, he commanded that in every commune the taxes to be raised should be specified by the governor in the presence of the cadis, emirs, and imams, and that then, graven on wood, stone, copper, or iron, a notice of what had been decided should be posted in front of the mosques and other public buildings.

As regards uncultivated land, he decreed that it should belong to anyone willing to till it. Whoever should bring land under cultivation would be exempt from taxation for the first few years, and should afterwards be taxed in accordance with the fertility of his farm. Should the original owner turn up and prove his rights, the State would pay him half of the taxes, while the one who was actually farming the land would retain the fruits of his labour. Ghazan promoted land development by an irrigation system and the building of canals; he provided the villages with mosques and baths; he had towns built which became important centres of trade; and he fostered the handicrafts. A bold warrior, a lover of the arts and sciences, a botanist, a chemist, and an astrologer; and, from sheer love of handicraft, an able smith, turner, and saddler—he restored order and peace in his realm, doing so mainly in typical Mongolian ways. Rashid-ud-Din, his historiographer and vizier, who wrote an extravagant eulogy of his master, records, on almost every page of his biography, the execution of one high official or another. No less harshly than with the officials, did Ghazan deal with his own relatives, with the princes and the generals, who tried to sow

dissension in his empire. He simply exterminated them, that no one should be left able to fan the flames of civil war.

Although he went over to Islam, and although the coins of his realm were the first in the Ilkhanate no longer to bear the name of the Khakan, he never ceased from regarding himself as descendant and heir of Jenghiz Khan. Rashid-ud-Din reports that he was better acquainted than any other Mongol with the genealogy of his ancestors and with the names of old and new Mongolian chieftains. As guardian of Mongolian tradition and in his desire for peace and order, he did his utmost to re-establish Mongolian rule in its pristine and mighty unity. This was done, not for his own fame, nor from any desire for new conquests, but because he recognised how destructive was fraternal strife. That was why he sent embassies to all the other Mongolian realms with a proposal that Kublai's grandson Timur should be recognised as Khakan. Although his own lifetime did not witness the fulfilment of this scheme, shortly after his death his brother and successor Uljaitu was able to write to Philip the Fair, King of France, that the five-and-forty years' fraternal strife between the Mongol realms was over, and that all the Mongols were again unified.

But this unification came too late. The Mongols no longer rode from the Desert of Gobi to Hungary, from China to Western Asia. Evolution had already transcended the conditions which made such an empire possible. The idea of world-conquest, which had been the driving force of that empire, was extinct. There was, indeed, no longer a question or a possibility of joint military action, for each of these Khanates was now too much concerned with its own interests. Thus the general recognition of the Khakan was a mere formality, a sign that the various Khans considered it more advantageous for them to keep the peace with one another for a time, and thus to encourage the caravan trade.

All the same, Ghazan's wise government during the nine years of his reign made an undisturbed twelve-years' reign possible for his brother Uljaitu. But this successor, being a weakling,

allowed the chieftains to regain power. The satraps, in their provinces, held sway as semi-independent Khans; and it was only by favour of the mighty Emir Chupan, viceroy of Khorassan, that, after Uljaitu's death, his son Abu-Said was able to ascend the throne. It was Emir Chupan who governed despotically in Abu-Said's name, suppressing the revolts of other governors and chieftains with the draconian severity of a Mongol of the old school—while at the Khan's court the time was spent in more "civilised" amusements. Abu-Said was fond of playing the lute, composed songs, went rowing accompanied by instrumentalists and singers, until, one day, the strict tutelage of the "Mayor of the Palace" became burdensome, and though Abu-Said lacked energy to revolt openly, he was able to secure Chupan's assassination.

Thus he destroyed the last vestiges of his own power. Each tribal chief became supreme in his domain, without troubling about the orders of the Khan. The integrating force had disappeared; and when Abu-Said, at the age of thirty-one, died without male issue (having, it was said, been poisoned by Chupan's pretty daughter whom he had married), the realm fell to pieces. Ghazan's extirpatory methods had destroyed all the important descendants of Hulagu, so that there was now no one left with sufficient authority to seize and keep the throne of the Ilkhans.

Conquered and compacted by Hulagu, forty years later renovated and fortified on Mohammedan lines by Ghazan, after thirty-five years more the realm of the Ilkhans was the first of the subsidiary Mongolian Khanates to be dissolved into its constituent parts. Each of the provincial governors, having discovered some obscure descendant of Hulagu, declared this person Khan, and, with such a backing, began to make war against his neighbours in the hope of annexing their provinces.

Had there now been ruling in China, the land of the Great Khan, an energetic man, his commands would doubtless have been sufficient to re-establish order in Western Asia. But the

sovereign of China at this juncture was a boy of thirteen destined to prove the last Emperor of the Yuen Dynasty founded by Kublai. Life among highly civilised people, and the adoption of their manners and customs, proved even more destructive to the offspring of Jenghiz Khan than their incessant blood-feuds. Civilisation undermined their vital energy.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE YUEN DYNASTY

I

UNDER the Mongolian dominion, China, at length reunited, attained the climax of her significance in the world. She stood at the centre of world trade; threads of traffic and of spiritual communion connected her with the whole continent. Far in advance of other lands, she became an object of desire for enterprising foreigners, and their desires were fulfilled, for China opened her doors to everyone. Christian bishoprics of various sects, Italian commercial settlements, colonies of Mohammedan merchants, came into being in various parts of the realm. Franciscan friars were bishops of Peking; one of them translated the New Testament and the Psalms into Mongolian; the Lamaist hierarchy was built after the Roman Catholic model. An age of toleration ensued; and Peking was the most international city that had ever existed.

But Chinese civilisation, China's thousand-year-old tradition with its elaborate ceremonial, its stereotyped modes of life, and its symbolism, were disastrous to the Mongolian Emperors as soon as, in place of so outstanding a personality as Kublai's, men of average calibre mounted the throne. They had to adapt themselves to their environment, to participate in a rigid formalism, and, confined in the fetters of a Far-Eastern Byzantinism, they became the playthings of courtly intrigue. Although, under Kublai, they had gone over to Lamaism (the Tibetan variant of Buddhism), they had to learn that the acquirement of Confucian virtues must be the highest aim of the Emperors, and their utmost reward the praises of scholars and poets.

Timur, Kublai's grandson and successor, paid court to "the

classics" by reintroducing a general veneration of Confucius and reopening his temples for worship. Timur was convinced that the cultivation of the arts is a sovereign's greatest privilege. The Mongolian demand for amusement brought a new note into Chinese literature, hitherto over-serious; and a number of works of a lighter kind were written. The novel and the drama flourished afresh. The stringed instruments of the West found their way to the Far East, and China learned a new music. A carefree life of pleasure began at the Chinese court.

Timur, nevertheless, retained the practical instincts of his ancestors. He plainly recognised the distinction between the ideals voiced by the Chinese classical writers and the realities of life, and was careful to purge his officialdom of wrongdoers. He cashiered no less than 18,000 mandarins because, although almost all of them were Chinese scholars, they shamelessly exploited the people instead of practising the virtues they preached. He protected the peasants and their farms from his warriors, who were inclined to tread cultivated and uncultivated land without distinction beneath the hoofs of their horses and their cattle; and he sunned himself in the gratitude and honour that were shown to him. But he was already forgetting that he was only the ruler of a warrior caste which had to keep under restraint a people one hundred times as numerous as itself, a people essentially alien and fundamentally hostile; so, though quick to banish officers who had committed the most trifling faults, he regarded warlike enterprises as matters of little moment, even when they turned out amiss and resulted in the annihilation of his armies. Neither he nor his China bothered about these unessential matters. Thus he failed to perceive that he was entering a dangerous road, which would lead his successors to their doom.

The easy-going life of the Imperial Palace assorted ill with the rough Mongolian virtues. When warlike operations became necessary from time to time on the borders of his mighty realm, these rude encounters were left to persons who were not fitted for life at court. On the frontiers, therefore, the genuine Mongols

fought and died, while the Mongols who frequented the neighbourhood of the imperial throne became continually more Chinese, drank, gambled, or hunted, and, in sign of their devotion to the things of the spirit, even if their delight in literature was only feigned, professed that it was their main concern—that and such important matters as the competitive examinations for mandarins of the various degrees.

Ere long the Emperor was surrounded by an impenetrable wall of favourites and courtiers, who turned to profitable account the unceasing disputes about the succession. Intrigue and treachery were rife whenever there was a change in the occupant of the throne. Rival candidates were poisoned or otherwise murdered, their adherents were slain or banished, and the successful aspirant felt anything but secure. The Emperors succeeded one another after shorter and shorter reigns (many of them, too, dying a non-natural death); and, feeling more and more estranged from their Mongolian home, they relied to an increasing extent upon the Chinese.

Yet the subjugated people never regarded the barbarian ruler as an equal. The weaker and more incapable the government became, the more did opposition intensify, and the stronger did resistance grow.

The thirteen-year-old boy Toghon-Timur, who, four decades after Kublai's death, mounted the throne as his ninth successor, was no more than the victim of the destiny which had reserved for him the role of being the last Emperor of the Yuen Dynasty. He was absolutely incapable of understanding and consolidating his position, in an epoch characterised by the tendency of subterranean hates to erupt. His prime minister was a Sinophobe, inclined to act upon a proposal that dated from Jenghiz Khan's time—to exterminate the Chinese. Not that he designed to slay them all, but only those "named Chang, Wang, Liu, Li, and Chow"—about nine-tenths of the population. Since this scheme was impracticable, he tried to check the ferment by reprisals. Prohibition followed prohibition. The Chinese were forbidden to wear the various emblems and colours which constituted

the badges of secret societies; they were forbidden to learn the Mongolian tongue; they were not allowed to bear arms; their horses were confiscated.

But it was too late for such forcible measures to have a good effect. They served merely to increase the general embitterment, and the minister fell into disgrace. Under his successors, matters went from bad to worse. Terrible natural catastrophes, earthquakes, mighty floods, devastated the land; famines occurred; and the Pekingese court did not stir a finger to help. Taxation was most oppressive, and banditry became general.

As soon as the bandits realised that the government was too weak to hold them in check, they gave their activity a political turn, to free China from the Mongol yoke. Open rebellion broke out along the Yang-tsze and in the province of Canton.

It was the south of China which rose. For several centuries the north had had to endure nomadic invasions and foreign rule, and had remained less particularist. While it assimilated the victorious dynasts, in the long run its own character had become modified, and its energies had been undermined. Down to Kublai's time, on the other hand, the provinces of the centre and the south had never known a foreign yoke. They were the national, the typically Chinese China, the China of the great artists and scholars, the China of commerce and of town life. The huge settlements along the Yang-tsze, the enormous seaports on the east coast, the towns of Canton and Fu-kien, lived their own lives, undisturbed by the Mongolian attempts at centralisation. They would not endure the absolutism of Peking, and nothing but the Mongolian garrisons which occupied all the strategic points had managed to restrain them so long from rebellion.

But by now Mongolian prestige had sunk to a very low level. The impoverished peasants flocked to join the successful adventurers and robber chieftains who offered them chances of plunder; and even though the Mongolian garrisons could suppress a rising here and there, the flames always broke out somewhere else. In this struggle the Chinese turned to account

their capacity for forming sects and secret societies; and soon the Mongols had been driven out of whole provinces.

It became plain, however, that there was neither organisation nor unified leadership of this revolt, for the bandit chiefs began to struggle one with another for power. They called themselves governors, princes, even emperors, plundering and burning recklessly, until complete anarchy ensued.

But at this moment, which offered the Mongols a last chance of consolidating their power anew, disputes broke out at court. One of the Emperor's sons had a quarrel with the prime minister, and the troops which had been summoned from Mongolia to fight the rebels fought instead beneath the walls of Peking on behalf of one party or the other.

Thus matters went on for a decade. The Emperor, in his palace, amused himself by inaugurating a ballet of sixteen dancing-girls and an orchestra of eleven musicians, who played a dance in honour of Buddha. He had a dragon-ship made which sailed about the waters of his park, and, while in motion, nodded its head, wagged its tail, and paddled with its feet. He hardly knew that the rebels had already deprived him of the whole of South China. However, when he did at length learn it, he commanded that their progress should be stayed at the Yangtze, but the order came too late, for in Chu Yuen-chang the rebels had found a leader.

The son of a poor countryman, and, being of delicate constitution, educated to become a Buddhist priest, he soon left the cloister and joined one of the robber bands as a private. Being a man of much intelligence, Chu Yuen-chang speedily advanced to the rank of lieutenant and then to that of captain. Finally he became leader of the whole band. Soon his reputation was firmly established, and, since he kept his men under discipline and did not allow them to pillage in the provinces and towns he conquered, he secured on all hands the support of the peasants and merchants, and his power steadily grew. At length he got control of Nanking, and there established a regular government. In view of the anarchy which generally prevailed, this

was a great achievement, which immediately bore excellent fruit. All the towns along the Yang-tsze were glad to open their gates to him, hoping that, under his protection, they would avoid the miseries of civil war.

From Nanking he began a campaign against the other bandit leaders, which lasted for another five years. By that time, Chu Yuen-chang had the whole territory of the sometime Sung Empire under his authority, and ventured to undertake the conquest of the north. He issued a proclamation summoning the Chinese to rise against the Mongols. It opened with the words:

"These barbarians are created to obey and not to command a civilised nation."

China responded with universal exultation. For the first time in a thousand years, the Chinese nation was no longer on the defensive against a barbarian inroad from Central Asia, but was itself advancing to the attack upon the enemy. The towns supplied money, the women brought their trinkets. The new leader's troops were universally received with enthusiasm, the fortresses opened their gates. The whole of China had had enough of the Mongols.

A few months sufficed to atone for the failures of more than a century. At the head of 250,000 men his generalissimo marched on Peking, the Tai-tu of Kublai. The campaign was no more than a military excursion. Chu's enemies were paralysed by the terror which had of old scattered the foes of the Mongolian army. These terrible Mongols, the conquerors of the world, who had held sway from Korea to Bagdad, from Liegnitz to Indo-China, fled in hopeless fear before the son of a Chinese peasant.

Vainly did the Mongolian ministers exhort the last Emperor of the Yuen Dynasty, saying:

"This is the realm of your great ancestor Kublai. You must maintain it to the death." Vainly did they urge him to engage in a decisive battle outside the walls of Peking, to conquer there or to perish. They could only do their best to cover the nocturnal

flight of their Emperor northward, as he recorded his misfortunes in rhythmical periods:

"O thou, my great city of Tai-tu, decked with all possible conveniences!

"O thou, my costly and cool summer residence of Shang-tu! Thou green plain of Shang-tu, where the sacred Emperors, my forefathers, lived in ecstasy! Through my sins has it come to pass that I have lost my realm.

"My Tai-tu, made out of nine materials of the noblest sort, and my Shang-tu which contains nine-and-ninety perfections,

"My lofty name and fame as Lord and Khakan of the World,

"My sublime name as ruler over wide spaces!

"When, early in the morning, I arose from my bed and looked forth from the roof of my palace, spicy aromas rose to my nostrils!

"Whithersoever I looked—all was beauty and splendour!

"My sacred city of Tai-tu, gloriously built by the all-powerful Emperor Kublai! Thou place where leisure never brought satiety! For neither in summer nor in winter did I ever experience sadness!

"You great and noble men who have been zealous and faithful in affairs. You, my much-loved and simple people! All, all have been wrested from me!"

II

The flight of the court was followed by a horrible blood-bath, an orgy of massacres, a rage for destruction, which spared nothing that had any sort of connexion with the Mongols. For three months the country was delivered over to the soldatesca and the executioners. The Mongols were slain in the streets, in the monasteries, in prisons, in swamps, were flung from the top of towers, and butchered in every conceivable way. Nothing that could remind the Chinese of the institutions of the detested rulers was to remain. Kublai's palaces were razed to the ground,

and even the walls of Peking were destroyed. When the ruthless killing was over, the province of Chi-li had been so hopelessly devastated and depopulated that colonists had to be sent from Shan-si to repopulate the villages and render it possible to till the fields. A year later, in 1369, Chu Yuen-chang, who had now assumed the imperial crown under the name of Hung-wu as the founder of the Ming Dynasty, ordered that the history of the Yuen Dynasty should be written—this signifying that he declared it to be extinct.

With the Mongols vanished their proteges, the foreigners. The Christian settlements and the Mohammedan colonies were destroyed, the bishoprics ceased to exist, the priests were murdered, even the cemeteries were dismantled.

Under the Ming rulers, China again shut herself away from the world and withdrew into herself. Trade and cultural relations with foreign lands were discontinued. The whole of Chinese legislation was revised in a nationalist sense, and in accordance with the traditions of the Tang Dynasty which had lasted five hundred years—the Golden Age of China. No longer was the realm afraid of the “barbarians from the North”; nor was it content to have driven them forth beyond the frontiers of Old China, for it followed them into their primal home, into Mongolia.

Vainly did the degenerate descendants of Kublai try to cling to Kan-su, as a last fragment of Chinese soil. Their resistance was easily broken. Thrust back into the sand-dunes of the Gobi Desert, they had no option but to return into the arid steppes of Mongolia where Karakorum, a century before the focus of the world, now lay an insignificant, forsaken desert township with the pitiful relics of what had once been a splendid imperial palace.

But the expelled Mongols were unwilling to accept their fate. Under Togus-Timur, the son of the last Mongol Emperor, they gathered their forces and tried to resume the tactics of their forefathers, that of sudden raids into the border provinces of China. But now they had to face a different China. In the year

1388 a Chinese army reached Karakorum and destroyed it, pursuing the Mongols as they withdrew down the Kerulen, and inflicting on them a decisive defeat beside the waters of Puir Nor. The nomads lost their cattle, their tents, all their possessions, and 70,000 of them were taken prisoner. The whole "imperial" family fell into the hands of the victors. From this catastrophe the Mongols never recovered. The tribal chieftains declared themselves independent, and the life of the country returned to the anarchic conditions of the days before Jenghiz Khan. In Chinese history books we read that the Mongols, thereupon, ceased to speak of themselves as "Mong-ku" (Mongols), and again adopted the name of Ta-tan (Tartars).

But while the Ming Emperors after the expulsion of the Mongols tried to expunge even their memory, as heirs of the Yuen Dynasty they took over the claim to world dominion. Mongolia was still treated as a Chinese province. The Chinese advanced as far westward as Eastern Turkestan, part of Jagatai's fief; and in the same year as that in which they made an end once for all of Mongolian dominion in the battle beside the waters of Puir Nor, they sent embassies to every country over which Kublai had once held sway, demanding instant submission.

This was at the time when the Golden Horde, after a long period of internal dissensions, had achieved renewed power under Khan Toktamish.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE GOLDEN HORDE

I

MENACED by no external foes, with only weak neighbours in all directions whose lands invited onslaught, and without fixed frontiers except for the narrow southward boundary adjoining the realms of the Ilkhans, the Golden Horde could develop unhindered into the mightiest empire of the Asiatic West. Nowhere within its domains was any ancient and highly developed civilisation like that of the Chinese, the conquest of whom by the Mongols in the East altered the nature of the conquerors, or the Mohammedan civilisation which opposed the Mongols in Western Asia with irreconcilable enmity. Developed by Batu in accordance with Jenghiz Khan's principles wholly as a nomadic realm, the only result of its contact with the two Asiatic civilisations was that it received from them all the advantages which the steppe-dwellers expected from settled populations. Caravans brought to the Volga whatever China and Western Asia could offer; and Islam, the deadly enemy of the Ilkhans, had been, since Bereke's time, a faithful friend and civilising influence for the Golden Horde, so that Mohammedan architects developed Bereke's New Sarai into a splendid city full of palaces, mosques, and baths—a town of marble and porphyry equipped with all the luxuries of the day. And since the Khans of the Golden Horde, like the bulk of Mongol rulers, were lovers and promoters of the arts and sciences, their capital soon became one of the leading centres of Moslem civilisation and of the Asiatic cult of pleasure—for its adoption of the Mohammedan faith did not prevent the enjoyment of carouses; while its women

knew neither the harem nor the veil, and freely participated in the delights of the men.

Simultaneously with the products of the two great Asiatic civilisations, the wares of the West found their way to the Volga. From the south, Italian merchants travelled to the horde. The Khans had opened several ports to them in Crimea, where their consuls resided. But in these towns the Venetians and the Genoese settlements were kept strictly apart, lest the quarrelsome Westerners should slay one another in the territories of the Khan. From the north, by way of Novgorod and Nijni-Novgorod, Hansa goods came to the Volga.

Thus served by all the civilisations, and given a chance of enjoying their multifarious products, the Khans were nevertheless able to preserve the ancient customs of their people, and remained what their ancestors had been, nomadic rulers. In the vast steppe-land which stretched from the Sea of Aral to the Carpathians, pastured the Mongolian mares, unhampered by tillage, and the Mongolian hordes with their huge herds of cattle could wander whithersoever they pleased. The indigenous nomads of the South Russian steppes had long since been assimilated by the Mongols, whose cattle they tended as slaves, or who served in the Mongolian armies. The former centres of the Russian south, such towns as Kiev and Chernigov, had been abandoned by their populations, and had sunk to the level of large villages. The steppes of Asia were bounded only by the Carpathians, and the lands along their borders were not so much a bulwark as the almost defenceless objects of nomadic raids.

On one occasion the Tsar of Bulgaria had, as a vassal, to accompany the Mongols against Byzantium; another time the Emperor of Byzantium entrusted his troops to Nogai, the viceroy of South Russia and his son-in-law, who was making war against Bulgaria. Then, a little later, the Tsar of Bulgaria gave his daughter in marriage to a son of Nogai, and helped him to subjugate the kingdom of Serbia. Hungary, whose king, at the instance of the Pope, refused a matrimonial alliance with the

Khan, was punished by one Mongolian invasion after another so that his country was devastated as far as Pest.

To secure help from the West, the Prince of Galicia avowed himself a convert to Roman Catholicism. The Pope bestowed on him a kingly crown, but no further help was forthcoming, and in the end he too had to submit to the Mongols. As their vassal, he was compelled to join them in a campaign against Lithuania and Poland. Urged on by the Poles, the Pope did indeed preach the Cross throughout Germany and Bohemia, and commissioned the Teutonic Knights to hasten to the help of the Poles; but no one moved a finger, and the Mongolians advanced as far as the Vistula, took Sandomir and burned the citadel, reduced Cracow to ashes, laid the country waste as far as Oppeln, and retired carrying off with them thousands of Christian slaves. On the return journey the Mongolian commander noticed that the Galician towns had protected themselves with walls and dykes, and commanded that the fortifications should be levelled. Thereupon the haughty King of Galicia had no choice but to countermand his own orders, and instruct the citizens of all his towns from Lemberg to Kamenetz and Lutsk to tear down the fortifications they were erecting, or if they were of wood to set them on fire.

Already during the lifetime of Batu the great Slav area of North Russia had been fully incorporated into the dominions of the Golden Horde.

When Batu, after his return from Hungary, was establishing his realm, and commanded the Russian princes to come and pay homage to him, two of them, the Grand Prince Yaroslav of Vladimir and his son Alexander, adopted the policy of absolute submission. They recognised that in a realm like that of Batu, the Khan, as "Ruler of Rulers", as one who wanted to rule through the territorial princes, was, in a sense, dependent upon them. They knew that Russia could expect no help from the West, where hardly had the Mongols withdrawn from the ravaged North Russian principalities than the Swedes and the Teutonic Knights began a robber campaign against Novgorod,

the only one of them which had been spared. Alexander saved Novgorod by first defeating the Swedes beside the Neva and then the Teutonic Knights on the ice of Lake Peipus. But, living as they did on the frontiers between the powers of the East and the powers of the West in a Russia which must take one side or the other, the father and the son were convinced that the East was stronger. They therefore renounced Russia's old way of looking westward, and turned to the East, thus giving to their country for centuries to come the political trend which doubtless equipped it for ever with its double visage both European and Asiatic.

Yaroslav was the first Russian prince to visit Batu and swear fealty, and was then sent by his new liege-lord on the long journey to Karakorum. Although the father died there (poisoned, as was generally believed), Alexander continued the same policy. He rejected the Pope's offer to send the Teutonic Knights to his aid against the Tartars on condition that he would become a Roman Catholic, and thus saved his country from the evil fate of being the battlefield between Europe and Asia—a fate which at that juncture would certainly have ended with the victory of Asia and the complete annihilation of Russia. Like his father, he journeyed to the Volga, and paid homage to Batu.

Then, joining forces with the Mongols, he made war upon his own brethren, in order to force them to obey the Khan; he severely punished his Novgoroders, who rebelled against a Mongolian census; and personally saw to it that the taxes, including those that must be paid in men, should be accurately and punctually delivered. Frequently he journeyed to the horde, that by his personal submission and humility he might secure clemency for disobedient towns, save them from punitive expeditions which undoubtedly would have led to their destruction. His attitude convinced the Mongolian Khans of the advantages to be gained when a devoted but strong prince ruled the conquered territories in their behalf, so they repaid loyalty with loyalty, protecting him and uplifting him above the other

princes. Thus it was thanks to Alexander's policy (in a Russia then severed into such numerous principalities) that one principality was set over the others, and one prince became a sort of general administrator of the "Russian fief" of the Golden Horde.

It was the Grand Principality of Vladimir and the Grand Prince's throne which first secured these privileges; then, in due time, they were transferred to Muscovy, whose princes most sedulously practised the policy of Alexander, and, under the toleration and with the good will of the Khans, "collected the Russian earth". Thanks to this policy there was ultimately formed the Muscovite realm which would in due time liberate Russia from the "Tartar yoke", and then itself enter into the heritage of the Golden Horde.

II

The Khan was Ruler of Rulers. Neither the Grand Princely dignity nor the throne was inheritable, each being a fief to be bestowed upon one of the Russian princes in accordance with the Khan's will. The effect of this was that, after Alexander's death, there was a race among his relatives and offspring to the Golden Horde, in order, by gifts, bribery, and humble submission, to secure the "yarlik"—the necessary charter of the Khans. Such races were to take place again and again for more than a century.

For the Khans who granted the charter could revoke it at any moment, with the result that a decision given in favour of one competitor did not prevent rival candidates from continuing to work against the successful incumbent by arousing suspicion in every possible way, by declaring that he embezzled the taxes, by blackening his name and character, and by trying to win the Khans' favour by offering higher payment.

Thus each Grand Prince, in order to fulfil his undertaking, had to misuse the powers entrusted to him, to infringe the rights

of other princes, and extort from them excessive taxes. Since there were no fixed ordinances as to the relations between the princes, arbitrariness, violence, and intrigue prevailed. Each Grand Prince tried to enlarge his own powers, and every such attempt aroused violent retaliation. The surrounding minor principedoms were almost invariably forming combinations against whomever happened to be Grand Prince; the towns revolted, civil wars broke out, and the more notable of the minor princes, who regarded as sacred their right to pay their taxes personally to the Khan, used the opportunity to sow dissension, and to accuse their own nearest relatives before the Khan.

When Alexander's brother ascended the Grand Princely throne, his worst enemy was Alexander's son Dmitri; and hardly had Dmitri, in due course, himself become Grand Prince than his brother Andrei intrigued against him in the horde, until at length, being likewise provided with a yarlik, Andrei appeared in Russia at the head of a Mongolian army to dethrone his brother.

"The deplorable times of Batu were renewed in Russia. Towns and villages went up everywhere in flames. No one was spared on account of sex, position, or age. Those who escaped being put to the sword or thrown into prison, perished from cold and hunger in the forests or steppes whither they had fled."

At length Dmitri, the Grand Prince, had to run away. However, he did not leave Russia, but went south to seek the aid of Nogai the powerful viceroy of those regions. Nogai received Dmitri with due honour, supplying him with troops, and, thus reinforced by Nogai's Mongols, Dmitri returned to North Russia to carry on the war against his own brother and against the Mongols of the Khan of the Golden Horde.

These incidents reported in the chronicles throw a flash of light upon what was going on in the realm of the Golden Horde, showing how it was already being reft by internal dissension.

Hitherto the Khans had derived nothing but advantage from Batu's system of organisation. The Grand Prince had to share up all the taxes in gold, silver, furs, cattle, and human beings; and the jealousy felt towards him by the other princes ensured that nothing would stick to his fingers on the way. When the princes quarrelled one with another, they came to the horde bearing gifts, and if it was necessary to call the Grand Prince to account, he also brought presents. There was always loot to be secured on a punitive expedition, and so the Khans, secure in the Golden Horde, had been glad to promote dissensions and jealousies among the Russian princes. But now the Russians began to turn to their own account the dissensions that were spreading among the Mongols.

Nogai had served three Khans faithfully, taking the field with them against enemies in the west and the south, against the Ilkhans, against Byzantium, against Poland and Lithuania; but in the four decades that had elapsed since the foundation of the Golden Horde, the power of Nogai's fief, which comprised large areas of fertile territory northward of the Black Sea, had become excessive. Son-in-law of the Emperor of Byzantium and ruler of Bulgaria and Serbia, Nogai was now no longer willing to obey commands issued from the horde beside the Volga. Dmitri's flight and demand for aid gave Nogai the chance of intervening on his own account in the affairs of the realm; and the position between the two hordes, as concerned the relationships of power, was now such that the Khan thought it expedient to tolerate this intervention, and the Russian princes were forced to submit once more to Dmitri.

A new power had arisen within the realm of the Golden Horde, and, in the end, open dispute between the rivals was inevitable. Nogai brought matters to a head by helping Toktu, who was in the direct line of descent from Batu and was one of a quadrumvirate of Khans, to make short work of the other quadrumvirs and become sole Khan. Now that Nogai had assumed the office of king-maker, he would be able, he hoped, to become virtually supreme in the realm. But he miscalculated.

Toktu, who was young and energetic, a Mongol ruler of the ancient stamp, was not the man to accept dictation from a presumptuous vassal. Having first drowned in blood the Russian movement towards freedom by laying fourteen towns waste, he mobilised his forces as soon as opportunity offered for settling accounts with Nogai, and invaded South Russia. He encamped beside the Dnieper, and awaited the freezing of the river, intending to cross it on the ice—but that winter the Dnieper did not freeze. This gave Nogai time to make adequate preparation, and he was able to defeat the Khan's troops. Toktu fled, but only to return with a yet larger army. Nogai tried to form an alliance with the empire of the Ilkhans, but there Ghazan, the wisest sovereign of his day, was enthroned. Ghazan declared that it was contrary to the law of the Yasak to nourish dissension.

A second battle ended in favour of Toktu. Nogai was wounded, and died while in flight. His sons dispersed, some of them entering the service of the Ilkhans, and others that of Byzantium. The power of the Nogaïans was broken, although the name was still used by the Krim-Tartars until well on into the nineteenth century.

The hopes which the Russian princes had entertained that the Mongolian forces would be permanently divided, remained unfulfilled. Reunited under Toktu, who in all respects adhered to the ancient Mongolian tradition and even forsook Islam to return to the religion of his forefathers, the Golden Horde attained the highest point of its development. With the revival of the Yasak and of ancient customs, there was also a return to the idea of a concentration of all Mongolian forces.

In each of the three realms there was now an incumbent on the throne who was fully aware of the advantages of an undisturbed interchange of civilising and commercial influences, with the result that as late as the opening of the fourteenth century the Mongolian Empire revived under the great-grandsons of Batu and Hulagu and under Timur, the grandson of Kublai, who was universally recognised as Khakan.

III

Whereas in the Mongolian realm harmony prevailed for the moment at least, in Russia, among the Slavs, dissension and opposition reached a climax. The mutual imprisonments, robberies, and devastations undertaken by the rival princes; the ravages of the Mongolian armies that they summoned to lay waste one another's domains; and the horrors wrought by civil wars that went on for generations—had reduced the country to an indescribable state of misery, "which was only intensified by frightful natural catastrophes, such as storms of unusual violence, droughts, famines, pestilence, forest-fires, and conflagrations in the towns."

It was from the Orthodox Russian Church that at length came the impulse towards renovation and union. The ecclesiastics saw that faith was the only thing which continued, under the foreign yoke, to form a tie between the mutually opposed Russian territories, the only thing which created a common bond. In conjunction with the boyars, the nobility of Old Russia, they saw that nothing could save Russia from complete chaos except the re-establishment of a strong centralised authority which would at least put an end to the perpetual feuds. The upshot of these considerations was that the Metropolitan, who had removed his see from the ruined city of Kiev to the comparative security of Vladimir, established there a spiritual centre, assuming the title of "Metropolitan of All Russia", and inducing the local Churches to recognise his supremacy. With this enhanced authority, he tried to promote the recognition of one supreme secular power side by side with the spiritual power—a "Grand Prince of All Russia".

Meanwhile among the Russian princes there had been a shift of power. Principalities of the East and the South, and the borders of the North Russian forest areas, were most exposed to Tartar invasion, and had been more especially laid waste. Their inhabitants migrated more and more into the safer central principalities and settled there, thus increasing both the military

and economic strength of these princes. The territories of the West, which were unceasingly at war with the Poles, Lithuanians, Teutonic Knights, and Sweden (sometimes repelling invasion, and at other times becoming invaders in their turn), wanted from the other princes help in their struggles, but had little interest in more generalised Russian affairs. The upshot was that as claimants to the Grand Princely realm there came in question only the rulers of two principalities in the very middle of the Russia of those days, which were so well protected on all sides that since the time of Batu they had been practically free from invasion. These were the principalities of Tver and Muscovy.

Tver, being the older and the richer, was able to secure the Grand Princely yarlik or charter by the promise of larger payments, and the Metropolitan crowned Prince Michael of Tver as the first "Grand Prince of All Russia". But thereupon the malcontents promptly rallied round his adversary, Prince Yurii of Moscow. After Toktu's death, Yurii made pilgrimage to the Golden Horde, spent two years there, married the sister of Uzbek, the young Khan, who thus became Princess of Moscow; and it was a matter of course that the Khan's brother-in-law should receive the Grand Princely yarlik. Yurii returned to Russia at the head of a Mongolian army.

Michael assembled his troops, defeated the Mongols, and took Yurii's wife, the Khan's sister, prisoner. Soon afterwards she died in captivity. This led to Michael's destruction, for Uzbek summoned him to the horde and there had him put to death. Yurii thereupon ascended the throne as the first Grand Prince of the House of Muscovy, the younger line of the descendants of Alexander. But the rivalry between Moscow and Tver persisted; once again Tver conquered, and once again to her own destruction.

These were the days of the greatest development of the power of the Golden Horde. Its warriors devastated the land as far to the north-west as Lithuania and as far to the south-west as Thrace where they destroyed Adrianople, while in the

south they seized the Caucasian principalities, and to the east established themselves in Khwarizm, southward of the Sea of Aral. Envoys from Venice and Genoa came to Sarai to beg for further concessions in Crimea; a papal legate appeared at Uzbek's court; the Russian Metropolitan was sent as the Khan's commissioner to the Emperor of Byzantium, whose daughter Uzbek had married.

Uzbek's word was law throughout this enormous realm. He would tolerate no contradiction. During his reign, nine Russian princes had to pay for insubordination with their lives; while Russian regiments were fighting on all the frontiers as part of the Khan's army. In honour of Uzbek, Mongolian tribes in the eastern part of his empire styled themselves Uzbeks, and when the Khan was converted to Islam, by his orders the Mongols of the Golden Horde followed his example.

During these days a relative of the Khan visited Tver, to make sure that the taxes were being paid in full. A rumour spread through the town that he intended to force the Russians to become Moslems, and on August 15, 1327, the day of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, the Slav population fell upon the Mongols and massacred them. The fortress in which Uzbek's cousins had taken refuge was set on fire and none of the Mongols were allowed to escape. This "Tartar Vespers" was the end of Tver. Uzbek summoned Prince Ivan of Moscow to the horde, gave him a force of 50,000 Mongolian troops to command, and sent him to take vengeance.

As executor of Mongolian vengeance on Russian lands Ivan opened the period of Muscovite rule which lasted for nearly three centuries. His policy was to subjugate the minor princes and the free cities such as Novgorod and Pskov, enforcing the will of the Khan and aided by the Mongolian army. "Throughout the Russian land there was, at this period, great affliction and distress and shedding of blood at the hands of the Tartars," records the chronicler laconically.

Throughout the next four decades, things went on in this way. No matter what Khan was enthroned, the Moscow Grand

Princes were always welcome guests of the Golden Horde. They brought with them gold and silver extorted from the towns and territories to an amount exceeding the normal demands of taxation, bribing the wives of the Khans, the Mongol nobles, and all other influential persons, and returning after each visit with new privileges and enhanced rights. Soon there was no one throughout Russia who could resist the overwhelming supremacy of Moscow. Muscovy was troubled by only one remaining enemy beyond the Russian frontier, Lithuania, whose power, under energetic rulers, extended beyond Kiev. But when the Prince of Lithuania drew the Khan's attention to the dangerous growth of Muscovy, the Grand Prince was able to convince the Mongols that he was only the defender "of the Russian fief of the Golden Horde" against Lithuania's onslaughts.

Thus within the realm of the Golden Horde, Moscow became an important centre, second only to Sarai. The latter was the ruling city, the master of wealth, the place which held all threads in its hands, being the pivot of Moslem civilisation. But Moscow was patiently waiting till its hour should strike, for after Uzbek's death in the year 1340 a gradual decline of the Mongol power set in.

IV

Just as the vigorous government of Ghazan had consolidated the realm of the Ilkhans for a quarter of a century, and ensured a peaceful regime, so, likewise, did the powerful personality of Uzbek ensure that a period of quiet, even brilliant dominion should persist throughout the reign of his son and his grandson. But even as Ghazan had not been able permanently to prevent the decay of his empire, which in course of time split up into independent provinces under strong viceroys and a weak central government, so too was Uzbek unable to do more than postpone for barely two generations the claims of the various Jenghizide rulers to independent dominion. By the time when the Yuen Dynasty was being expelled from China, struggles had broken

out among the various local Khans of the Golden Horde, each hoping for supremacy. Mongolian power steadily waned. The individual local Khans tried to strengthen their position by predatory invasions into Russian territory, but encountered formidable resistance, and had to withdraw. When, at length, among the numerous contending local Khans, Prince Mamai showed himself the mightiest, and tried to reduce to obedience his insurgent "Russian fief", Moscow felt strong enough to put up a vigorous resistance. So pale, now, even within the domains of the Golden Horde, had become the nimbus of Mongolian invincibility, that Mamai thought it expedient to request the aid of Lithuania. Dmitri, Grand Prince of Moscow, decided to prevent a junction of the hostile armies, and so, collecting all the forces which Russia could supply, he advanced against Mamai.

On September 8, 1380, a decisive battle was fought at Kulikovo beside the Don, and it is from this that the Russian historians date the liberation of Russia from the Tartar yoke.

By now, the Russians had grown familiar with Mongol tactics, for often enough during the last century had Russian divisions in the Mongolian army taken part in battles, and they therefore knew how to paralyse their effect. The Russian army was posted in such a position that a flanking movement was impossible. The Mongols had no option but to try and pierce the Russian front, and against this they broke their teeth in vain. When, at the cost of heavy losses, they at length succeeded in making one of the Russian wings give ground, Dmitri had a cavalry troop ready ambushed behind a wood, and his horsemen attacked the pursuers in the flank. This was an old Mongolian ruse, of which the Mongols themselves now became the victims.

Mamai's rout was complete, but the achievement had exhausted the forces of Russia, while Mamai, in the wide expanses of steppes between the Don and the Volga, where his tribal horde lay, began to assemble new warriors for a savage vengeance. The scourge of Batu's days was again threatening Russia, but the Slavs secured an unexpected respite. Mamai was just ready for his new campaign of annihilation when the tidings reached him that the local Khan

Toktamish had made himself lord over all the tribes of the White Horde (the eastern part of the realm, extending as far as the Sea of Aral), and was about to become master of the entire Golden Horde. Instead of marching northward against the Russians, Mamai had to move south-eastward against this unanticipated adversary. Beside the little river Kalka, where, one hundred and sixty years before, Jenghiz Khan's general Sabutai had first inflicted a decisive defeat upon the Russian princes and made the terror of Mongolian arms known in Europe, Mamai's army was annihilated, for behind Toktamish stood a new world-power which had sprung to life in the fourth of the fiefs allotted by Jenghiz Khan (the Central Asiatic Empire of Jagatai), the realm of Tamerlane.

CHAPTER XXV

THE CENTRE

I

THE centre of the Mongolian Empire was steppe-land, the land of nomads. It consisted of Mongolia proper and the country westward thereof, the former realm of Kara-Khitai, which Jenghiz Khan had conquered. In dividing up the various fiefs, Jenghiz Khan had assigned Mongolia to his youngest son Tuli, and the Central Asiatic domains (those which nowadays constitute Russian and Chinese Turkestan) he had given to his second son Jagatai. Down to the time of Mangu's death, these were the regions which produced the hardiest Mongolian warriors, and sent forth invincible armies of horsemen into all parts of the world.

When Kublai transferred his capital from Karakorum to Peking, and made Mongolia a mere province of the Chinese Empire, the Mongols of the tribal steppes, those who remained faithful to the traditions of their people, rallied round Kaidu, Ogatai's grandson, the hero of the Polish campaign, who carried on a struggle against Kublai, the Khakan, regarding him as a renegade. Driven by Kublai's armies into the Altai Mountains on the uttermost limits of Mongolia, Kaidu extended his rule westward and south-westward over the whole of Jagatai's fief.

As sustainer of what he regarded as genuine Mongolianism, he decreed at a kuriltai that the rough nomadic life which had been led by his ancestors under Jenghiz Khan was to be strictly adhered to. The Mongols were to go on living in the steppes and in the mountains, dwelling in tents as of yore, and trekking with their herds to summer or to winter pastures as the seasons decreed. Over the towns, the old Mohammedan centres of the sometime

realm of Kara-Khitai and of the eastern portions of what had once been the empire of Khwarizmia between the Amu-Darya and the Syr-Darya, a special governor was appointed, a Mohammedan merchant who was to collect the tribute and hand it on to the princes. There were to be no other relations between the nomads and the towns, lest the nomads should be seduced from their manners and customs and from their proper mode of life.

Thus did matters remain until the beginning of the fourteenth century. Then Turkestan reverted to the descendants of Jagatai.

II

The fate of this Central Asiatic region was determined by its situation. Being no more than the weak centre of powerful bordering territories, confined in all directions by the great Mongolian "local Khanates" of the Yuen Emperors, the Ilkhans, and the Golden Horde, it had no possibility of expansion. Every attempt of the restless nomad masses to pass beyond the circumscribed frontier resulted in overwhelming defeat.

Since the nomads were thus deprived of the possibility of expansion, their surplus energies found vent in unceasing fratricidal war, so that for the next half-century the realm of Jagatai knew no rest. In the perpetual struggle for supremacy none of the local Khans could afford to renounce the wealth and resources of adjoining townships, and it became apparent that neither the conquest of a city nor the laying of it waste was so destructive to it as was the continual proximity of the nomads. Though so often overrun and ruined, the towns of Western Asia continually revived, rising out of the ruins as soon as the destroyers retired, whereas the undisturbed towns of Turkestan perished, because as soon as they began to acquire a moderate degree of prosperity they were bled white by taxation, while their tillage served as pastureland for the nomads, and their stored food was carried off by their masters. Thus was the country sucked dry. A contemporary traveller writes: "All that we can find now in Turkestan

consists of ruins in a better or worse state of preservation. From a distance, one imagines oneself to be approaching a well-organised settlement, surrounded by rich verdure, and one approaches in the hope of meeting people—to find nothing but abandoned houses. The only inhabitants of this country are nomads who do not practise agriculture.”

Land which had been put under cultivation gradually reverted into steppe, while nomads came in ever renewed floods from the north to replace the settled population; Turcomans mingled with the dominant Mongols, the two together constituting the typical Central Asiatic people of Jagatai, with a mongrel language which was also known as “Jagatai”.

III

It seems to have been the mission of this realm, as centre of the Mongolian Empire, to become a liaison between the three more civilised sections of the heritage of Jenghiz Khan. The Mongolian reunion under Kublai's grandson Timur really gave Jagatai enhanced importance for a brief space. But the semi-independent tribal chieftains of Jagatai preferred the steady gains derived from the plunder of passing caravans to the doubtful advantage of regular trade through their country, so that instead of forming a persistent link between the realms, Jagatai, devastated by the incessant civil wars, proved the greatest hindrance to the unification of the Mongols. Besides, Jagatai itself was not a unified kingdom. Its two parts, Turkestan, on the one hand, and Transoxania, on the other (lying between the Amu-Darya and the Syr-Darya, and originally a part of Khwarizmia), differed too strongly, and in 1320, after being governed by about thirty Khans in brief succession, its two constituents became definitively severed.

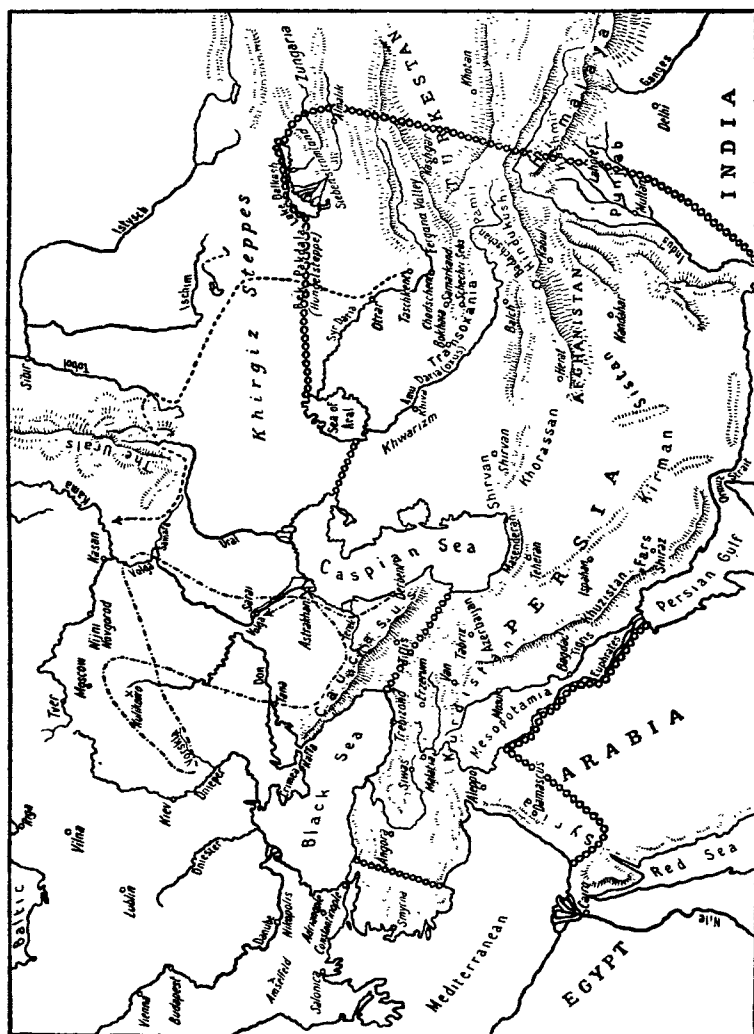
Turkestan being poor in cities, its chieftains remained warriors of the steppes, continually waging war against one another as they had done before the days of Jenghiz Khan. One would be con-

verted to Islam, and immediately begin to persecute the Christians; another would remain true to the Shamanistic religion of his forefathers, and would oppress the Moslems. Ever and again some Khan would appear who was strong enough, in this warfare of all against all, to extend his dominion for a while over the whole land, whereupon he immediately began to attack his neighbours. In Turkestan prevailed the uncontrolled life of the steppes, with its never-ending uncertainty, its eternal mutability.

Very different was the character of Transoxania. It was populous, industrious, thickly beset with towns which were thoroughly Mohammedan, and its Khans, like the Ilkhans of Western Asia, soon became puppets in the hands of their Emirs. Sandwiched between Turkestan and the realm of the Ilkhans it had, alike culturally, intellectually, and economically, a double-visaged character that was peculiar to itself. Out of this realm which was hermaphrodite both geographically and mentally, there developed, towards the middle of the fourteenth century, the world empire of Timur, better known to Westerners as Tamerlane.



PART FOUR
TAMERLANE



EMPIRE OF TAMERLANE

----- Tamerlane's Campaign against Russia 1381. ----- Tamerlane's Campaign against Tolkamash 1381.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE LAND BETWEEN THE REALMS

I

THE history of Western Asia is a living epic, the epic of the struggle of Iran against Turan, the settled world of Persian civilisation against the world of the roughriders of the steppes. Again and again, from the steppes of Turan, the waves of horsemen poured across the land of towns and gardens, of culture and science; and again and again did Iran assimilate the men from the steppes, transform them into devotees of Persian life, literature, and art, effeminating them, and then rising against the invaders. The Iranians although since time immemorial they had been subjugated and ruled dozens of times by the Turanians, never came to regard the latter as anything but inferiors, even when the Turanians assimilated the ways of the conquered. In the *Shahnamah*, compiled towards the close of the tenth or the beginning of the eleventh century, we read about the days of the glorious Parthian dominions: "History was void, the throne of Iran belonged to no one, and centuries passed during which one could say that there was no emperor anywhere upon earth."

In Shiraz, the City of the Roses, began the nationalist Persian rising which led to the overthrow of the Parthians, the "strangers", who had ruled Iran for nearly five hundred years and had defended them against Rome. In the Holy Wars which ensued, the Parthians were expelled, and the Persian dynasty of the Sassanids established.

While the Roman Empire was collapsing, for four centuries the Sassanids continued to resist the incursions of the Turanian nomads into the everlasting frontier-land between Iran and Turan,

into Transoxania—the region between the Oxus (the Amu-Darya) and the Jaxartes (the Syr-Darya).

After the conquest of Iran by the Arabs and by Islam, it was the new foreign rulers who summoned nomads from Turan into Iran to form a bodyguard out of the savage warriors who were to protect them against the populace and its tribal local dynasties. But Iran assimilated them all. A few generations later, the Sultans and the Shahs whose ancestors had made incursions from the steppes northward of the Syr-Darya rode into battle singing the verses of Persian poets and determined to protect Persia against new raids by their own fellow-tribesmen. The Seljuks fought against the Khwarizmians, and the Khwarizmians against the Mongols of Jenghiz Khan. But always they fought in vain. Destiny had decided that warriors who had grown effeminate in the Persico-Arabian environment should succumb to the hardy riders of the steppes.

The Mongolian wave had inundated all Asia, had wiped out every frontier, but nevertheless the Amu-Darya, the parting line between Iran and Turan, continued to separate the two realms—to divide the Western Asiatic empire of the Ilkhans from the Central Asiatic empire in which the descendants of Jagatai, Jenghiz Khan's second son, held sway, and which had now become known as the land of Jagatai. For one-and-a-half centuries the struggle vacillated hither and thither across the river.

The empire of the Mongol Khans fell to pieces. The provinces made themselves independent. But since the turbulent chieftains of Mongolian, Tartar, Turkish, or some other nomadic blood, owed allegiance, in accordance with the law of the *Yasak*, only to a Khan, and since none but a man of Jenghiz Khan's race could be Khan, almost every Emir kept a tame Jenghizide in his province, who bore the shadow-title of Khan. In this Khan's name the local chieftain ruled, and in this Khan's name he made war against his neighbours. For such wars were never-ending. Now, however, they were no longer between empires, but between provinces, wars of one Emir against another. And within each

sphere of influence, the local chieftains of the various tribes were at feud, or were conspiring against their own Emir.

To every Emir, to every chieftain, to every tribe, that only belonged which could be defended against the predatory instincts of the others. War was the basic element of life, creating heroes and destroying them. There are five things known only to Allah: the sex of the unborn child; when rain would fall; what the morrow would bring forth; where a man would die and when. Who can avert his destiny? Who can shield himself against the missiles of Allah? One whom His shafts struck would be transformed from an Emir into a robber, whose only resource was to hide from his enemies. He must make for the mountains or for the expanses of the steppes, and gather a livelihood by plundering caravans or driving off a herdsman's cattle. Until, one day, luck might turn, and success bring him new supporters, fresh honours, unexpected wealth. Success was a magnet. Bold men rallied round a hero. A robber band would grow to become an army, which could conquer towns and fortresses, and transform a bandit into an Emir once again.

II

Under these conditions, Transoxania was no longer a mere border strip between Iran and Turan, but a realm like another, hotly coveted by its neighbours in the east on the other side of the Syr-Darya, by Jagatai Mongols who moved hither and thither with their tilt-carts and their cattle across the steppes—but were always eager to expand at the cost of the dwellers southward and westward of the Amu-Darya, by seizing the Persian kingdom of Herat, or the dervish republic of Khorassan in which there were many towns worth plundering.

Transoxania is a wealthy and fertile land with big cities and a highly developed civilisation, abundant orchards and vineyards, rows of mulberry trees for sericulture, rich pastures for cattle. Across Transoxania ran the most important Asiatic trade-route which led from Western Asia to China. The merchants, the handi-

craftsmen, and the peasants were Persians; the warriors, whose horses, camels, and wethers were herded by slaves in the valleys, were Mongols, Tartars, men of Turan, nomads. No longer did they believe, as their forefathers had believed in the days of Jenghiz Khan, in the Eternal Blue Heaven or in the prophecies of the shamans, for they were good Moslems now. They knew that Allah proclaimed His will in soothsaying dreams; they opened the Koran at random, and the sura on which they lighted would tell them Allah's purpose. But in most respects they continued to live after the manner of their ancestors, drinking wine and letting their women go about unveiled.

The Emir of Transoxania, Kuzgan the One-Eyed, was a harsh and mighty ruler. He had lost his eye from an arrow-wound in battle, when he was defending his territory against the Khan; he had slain the second Khan in whose name he fought as soon as his puppet showed leanings towards independence; and had placed a third Jenghizide upon the defunct's throne. Many tribes obeyed his orders. The tribe of Berlas pastured its herds southward of Samarkand in the region of Shehri-sebs—the Green City whose walls every spring were crowned with verdure. Watered by streams from the mountains, the valleys of this part are filled with lush pastures, and the meadows are starred with flowers. The chieftain of the tribe, Teragai by name, was a pious man, a friend of the mullahs and the sheiks. One night in a dream he saw a handsome young man with the countenance of an Arab handing him a sword. He took the sword and swung it through the air. The flash of the steel illumined the whole world.

He asked a venerable sheik to interpret this dream, and the sheik replied: "A son will be born to you who, with the might of his sword, will conquer the whole world, converting all men to Islam, and cleansing the earth from the darkness of innovations and errors."

When, in due course, Teragai's wife gave birth to a son, he brought the infant to the sheik, who was just then reading the Koran, and was interrupted when he had reached the word 'tamurru' (a shock), so they named the boy Timur, Iron.

At the age of nine, Timur's, or Tamerlane's, favourite amusement was war. He divided his schoolfellows into two factions, appointing himself Emir, and conducting the battles. At twelve he was already ashamed of the games of boyhood, believed in his own wisdom and greatness, encountered everyone with dignity and pride, and frequented the company of men learned in the Koran that he might listen to their conversation. He was taught the game of chess, and passed much of his time playing it. At fifteen he developed a passion for hunting, and became a fine horseman. As regards the sixteen-year-old youth the chronicle which purports to be his autobiography declares: "At this age I already knew that the world was like a golden box full of serpents and scorpions, so I began to despise gold and fame." But the statement was untrue, for he was a prey to ambition.

He was a champion fighter, the boldest of hunters, leader of the young fellows of his own age. Once, in a mad ride, he set his mount to jump a ravine which none of those with him would venture. The horse alighted on the other side with only the fore hoofs on the bank. Timur swung himself over the beast's head into safety, while the next moment his steed fell into the abyss. His rescue was a miracle; a miracle, too, was the way in which he overcame dangers day after day; and another was his cure from a serious illness. Magical indications of his high mission—prophecies, astrological predictions, soothsaying dreams—multiplied; and Tamerlane's pride led him to aspire already to the high aim of becoming ruler of Transoxania. He dreamed of a conspiracy against Emir Kuzgan, but no one would join in his conspiracy, so Tamerlane, bearing the blessing of his spiritual counsellor, the venerable sheik Zain-ed-Din, rode off to enter the service of Emir Kuzgan.

Here he made acquaintance with genuine conspirators, the chieftains of powerful tribes, who could put thousands of warriors into the field. But each of these aspired to become Emir, and Tamerlane was quick to perceive that their plot would avail him nothing. So he went to Kuzgan and disclosed the plot.

Kuzgan did not know what to do. Should he try to play off the chieftains one against the other? Who was loyal to him and who secretly opposed? If a struggle took place between rival factions, whichever won to power his own (Kuzgan's) strength would be reduced. Then Tamerlane, being a crafty chess-player, advised him to give handsome presents to the malcontents. The Emir followed this counsel, and the chieftains quarrelled over the division of the spoils. This was Tamerlane's first step on the ladder of fortune.

Kuzgan was grateful to Tamerlane and gave him his granddaughter Aldshai to wife, of whom the chronicle sings: "Her beauty was like the young moon, and her body was as graceful as a cypress." He loaded Tamerlane with gifts: fine clothing and trinkets, silks, horses, slaves. He made him commander of a thousand. Young Tamerlane rode in Kuzgan's train, and followed him into battle. He was the first in the onslaught, the most courageous in hand-to-hand fight, and the cunningest weaver of plans. Soon he became the darling of the Bahadurs, tried and trusted warriors who had distinguished themselves by personal service, by bravery, skill in combat, staying-power in battle. He thirsted for warlike deeds.

At about this time began Timur's remarkable friendship with young Prince Hosain. He helped Hosain to subdue rebellious chieftains in the mountains of Afghanistan, and, in his overweening ambition, expected for this reason to be made joint sovereign. But Hosain had no thought of promoting his brother-in-law to be an equal, whereat Tamerlane, infuriated, wanted instantly to lead his warriors against his friend. When they refused to make war upon a grandson of their Emir, Tamerlane complained bitterly, saying to himself that he had learned the profound meaning of the proverb, "One true companion is worth more than a thousand false." But he showed no sign of his inward feelings, nor tried to punish his men. Instead, by favours and gifts, he began to foster devotion to his person.

III

When, for a space, there was no war, the Transoxanians held high festival, or organised hunts, these amusements being often more dangerous than war, for all had then ample leisure to develop their ambitious schemes and foment intrigues. Emir Kuzgan forgot that a man in his position was unwise to go hunting without being accompanied by a strong guard, and the husband of his own daughter and the father of his daughter-in-law fell upon him and slew him during the hunt, for they too wanted to find a Jenghizide in whose name they could themselves rule as Emirs. But the scheme miscarried. The other chieftains rose against them, and drove them and their Khan into exile.

Transoxania had no sovereign, and plots of all against all were rife. No one wished to miss the chance, each chieftain aspiring to supreme dominion. "Even those who would never have thought of such a plan for themselves, felt it expedient for the sake of their own safety to participate in the schemes of others."

Tamerlane, who, since his father's death, had become Lord of Shehri-sebs—the Green City—was shrewd enough, during this rivalry, to hound on the leading chieftains against one another, to gain adherents for himself from among the small fry, and to consolidate his power by cementing secret alliances in all directions. Before long he was counted among the three most powerful men in Transoxania. Bajazet Jelair, chieftain of the Jelair tribe, settled to the northward beside the Syr-Darya, and Tamerlane's uncle Hadji Berlas, chieftain of the Berlas and Lord of Samarkand, had more numerous retainers. But the pious son of Teragai, who since childhood had frequented the company of men learned in the law and who was a devout pupil of the venerable sheik Zain-ed-Din, had additional supporters among the priesthood.

Partly from fundamental religious toleration, and partly from superstitious dread, the Mongolian rulers, amid their multitudinous devastations, had spared the men of religion alone. In every town there was sure to be some pious Moslem from whom his co-religionists would seek protection, and sometimes secure it, and

the upshot was that the priestly caste was the only influential factor left to the native population. Since the conversion of the conquerors to Islam, they had gained more and more influence. All-powerful in the towns and still regarding the nomads as half-heathen, they promoted the choice of princes who were likely to diffuse and consolidate the forces of Islam. They believed they had found such a man in Tamerlane, and their influential support sufficed, though he had fewer retainers, to make him equal to Bajazet Jelair and Hadji Berlas. The three men resolved, without further contention, to rule the land jointly.

In this fortunate year of his rise to power, a son was born to Tamerlane, and the ambitious father named him Jehangir (he who seizes possession of the world)—a sign of what lofty schemes he cherished. Tamerlane invited the chieftains to a great festival, in honour of the occasion, but Bajazet Jelair and Hadji Berlas held aloof. They seemed to be plotting mischief.

Before new disputes could break out, a mightier hand was extended over them all, that of Toghluk Khan of Kashgar, the ruler of Turkestan, Lord of the Jagatai Mongols. Appearing at the head of a powerful army from the wide steppes of the east, he crossed the Syr-Darya to reconquer the province of his fathers (for he was a descendant of Jagatai) which Emir Kuzgan had taken possession of a few decades earlier.

It was too late for Bajazet Jelair to think of resistance, for his domain lay along the Syr-Darya, and was open to the first onslaught of the enemy. Hastening with rich gifts to the Khan, he paid homage to him, and, being the first to make submission, was rewarded with Samarkand, which was under the dominion of Hadji Berlas. The latter assembled his forces, but, after all, did not venture to take the field, and fled with his warriors and all his possessions across the Amu-Darya. Tamerlane hesitated. He went to consult his spiritual father, the sheik Zain-ed-Din, and the sheik said: "If Heaven be a bow and destiny the arrow, the marksman is Allah Himself. Whither wouldst thou flee to escape Him?"

Indeed, it was already too late for flight, for the advance-guard of the hostile army was invading Tamerlane's territory.

"Good policy," writes the chronicler, "can do more than heroic courage, and a clever idea is worth more than an army. An arrow discharged at a suitable moment and feathered by policy will infallibly find its mark in the heart of the foe." Tamerlane, the chess-player, had learned in his early years to make good use of the weapon of policy.

He rode to meet the enemy, invited their commanding officer to a sumptuous banquet, gratified the man's avarice by munificent gifts—and the Mongols, who had hoped for plunder, found themselves suddenly thrust into the position of guests. The commanding officer was actually induced to give Tamerlane a letter of introduction to Toghluk Khan.

Tamerlane, getting together all the valuables which were at his disposal, set forth to meet the Khan. On the way he encountered a still larger army, and its generals, too, wanted presents. Tamerlane gave them more than they asked, and received from each a letter of introduction.

Armed with these letters, Tamerlane was ceremoniously received by Toghluk, spread out before the Khan his valuable gifts, and excused himself because they were so small. He had started with more abundant and more suitable presents, but the Khan's officers, the same who had given him these letters of introduction, had been too exacting in their demands.

Messengers were sent bearing commands to the officers from Toghluk Khan. They must immediately hand over the presents Tamerlane had given them, and together with these all the loot they might have gathered in passing.

The chieftains, enraged by these arrogant demands, faced about with their Mongols, speeded across Transoxania, plundering as they went, recrossed the Syr-Darya, and, in their native steppes, started a revolt against the unjust Khan who wanted to make his warriors disgorge their spoils. Toghluk proposed to send part of his troops against them, but Tamerlane, who as a faithful vassal had remained meanwhile in the Khan's camp, warned him that unless he himself should go with the army, it would be very likely to desert to the side of the rebels. Taking the hint,

Toghluks actually made for Turkestan in person, at the head of his troops.

Whom could he leave as viceroy in Transoxania better than young Tamerlane, so wise in counsel, so loyal, and so devoted: "He entrusted me with the regency, and the necessary seals of office, he gave me command of more than 10,000 warriors. It was in the early stage of my rise to power that I conceived this plan and carried it out. Experience certainly taught me that a good idea can do more than an army of 100,000," we read in Tamerlane's autobiography, which describes no less than thirteen such plans which were conceived and put in force up to the time when Tamerlane at length became sole ruler over the country lying between the two rivers.

Bajazet Jelair was still enthroned in Samarkand as Toghluks Khan's vassal; but hardly had the Khan crossed the Syr-Darya than Hadji Berlas reappeared in Transoxania, and the two of them combined against young Tamerlane, who was so arrogant as to expect to command them. The chieftains who had paid homage to Toghluks, and upon whom Tamerlane, as viceroy, tried to depend, went over to the enemy, and Tamerlane had to summon the Khan back into the country.

Once more Bajazet Jelair hastened to the Khan to pay renewed homage, but as a precautionary measure he had put Samarkand into a state of defence, and this cost him his life. Hadji Berlas, too, ran away once more, but this time he was overtaken and killed. The Khan's troops crossed the Amu-Darya into the mountain regions of Afghanistan, where Prince Hosain ruled. Hosain, Emir Kuzgan's grandson, ventured to give battle to the Jagatai Mongols, but was defeated, and had to take refuge in the mountains. Now Tamerlane believed that he had got rid of all his rivals, and fancied he had reached the goal of his desires, but he was gravely disappointed when Toghluks Khan, withdrawing, left his son Ilyas with a strong force in Samarkand as regent of Transoxania. Tamerlane was no more than military governor, with practically no power, for the Mongolians of Turkestan, left as garrisons, did not owe him obedience.

They wanted to plunder, wanted to enjoy their loot; they took girls for themselves out of the houses, and sold young men into slavery; they carried off noted citizens and held them to ransom or tortured them to make them disclose hidden treasures. The populace murmured, the priests expected help from Tamerlane, and he fancied he could see a new road to power. He would foment a rising of the oppressed people, and become supreme as liberator of Transoxania.

With a devoted troop of followers he attacked the Jagatai Mongols, and took from them seventy distinguished prisoners. But his deed had no effect. The people did not rise. The Jagatai Mongols sent a report to Toghluk. Tamerlane intercepted the Khan's answer, and read therein his own death-warrant.

CHAPTER XXVII

KNIGHT-ERRANT

I

“**W**HEN you cannot come to terms with enemies who are stronger than you, you should seek safety in flight. Thus did the Prophet himself decide.”

From Samarkand, Tamerlane fled into the mountains. Now the man who had overcome all his enemies, the fortunate Emir, he who had expected to become ruler of Transoxania, was a homeless refugee, pursued, hunted. In the mountains he met his fellow-fugitive, Hosain, brother of his wife Aldshai, and grandson of Emir Kuzgan. The two of them joined such forces as remained to them, and now for three years ensued the romance of the knight-errant, a life “of adventure and hazard”.

With their retainers, they made up a company of sixty men. Each had his wife with him. They rode north-westward across the steppes to seek allies in Khwarizm, the land of the Turcomans. As they approached Khiva, the Emir sent a troop to arrest them, for he wished to hand them over to the Khan. By night they fled from his domains, but he pursued them at the head of his detachment.

Hearing the noise of pursuit, they prepared for battle. Tamerlane divided his sixty into five groups, and directed the skirmish from an elevation. His riders charged the enemy. Hosain's horse was shot under him, but Hosain succeeded in swinging himself on to one of the horses of the foe. By this time he was surrounded, and nothing but Tamerlane's audacious onslaught saved him.

Now had come the hour of evening prayer, and the warriors on both sides broke off the fight, turning towards Mecca, to discharge their sacred duty. Then, as soon as prayers were over, they

were at it again ding-dong with renewed energy. By nightfall of the sixty men only seven remained to Tamerlane and Hosain, while the Emir's whole force had been annihilated with the exception of fifty. But with these fifty he continued the pursuit. The two wives had to ride one horse, in front of the men, who covered their retreat until the steppe-land was traversed and a cultivated region was entered. Now the pursuers gave up the chase.

Beside a spring, the refugees found some shepherds, from whom they were able to buy a couple of wethers for food. As they continued their journey, they were joined by three pedestrians who, encamped after dark, stole three horses and escaped. Now the women, too, had to continue the journey on foot.

It would have been foolish for Tamerlane and Hosain to keep together. While their joint forces had amounted to a squadron of sixty men, this had formed a respectable body; but now the leaders had to depend upon their names and their personal prestige, and Hosain, whose original home was in the mountains of Afghanistan, could hope there to find adherents. They parted, therefore, agreeing to meet after a while beyond the Amu-Darya with such warriors as they might be able to gather together. Hosain departed, and Tamerlane was left alone with his wife Aldshai and one serving-man.

Turcomans attacked them, believing them to be robbers. Placing the woman between them, the two men prepared to sell their lives dearly. But they would have been doomed had not one of the Turcomans, who had visited Samarkand, recognised Tamerlane. In alarm he restrained his fellow-countrymen from further hostilities, and begged the "Emir" for forgiveness. They were saved.

The chieftains of the Turcomans extended them full hospitality. For three days they remained with the tribe, exchanging news; then they rode on, provided with food, horses, and an escort of ten men.

But news travels swiftly in the steppes. When an Emir who has fallen upon evil days appears in the territory of one of his

neighbours, the inhabitants are suspicious. Either he wants to re-establish himself in power, and in that case he will try to seize his neighbour's land, or else he is being pursued, and the foes who are on his trail will lay the country waste. Ali-Bek, Lord of the region in which Tamerlane hoped for a long rest, wished to guard against both these possibilities. He sent a troop which seized Tamerlane, fettered him, and penned him with his wife and his serving-man in a cow-house which could be converted into a prison.

Time passed. Terribly tedious were the days for nomads accustomed to freedom and movement; interminable were the nights in the cow-house which swarmed with vermin and stank of cow-dung. After a month, Tamerlane swore to Allah that he would never throw anyone into prison without full and careful examination. Why was he being kept under arrest? Why was he not brought to trial? For how long was he still to be held prisoner? After two months he began to form foolhardy schemes. At any cost he must try to escape. He would fight for liberty. Even if he should be slain during the attempt, he would at least be buried outside this pestilent jail. Better to lie dead in free earth than to rot in a pen.

Snatching a sword from one of his guardians, he flung himself upon the others and drove them before him. Then he heard the fugitives shout: "The prisoner is running away, running away!" This pricked him to shame. He, Tamerlane, a runaway? Still sword in hand, he forced himself into the rooms of Ali-Bek scattering the alarmed menials, determined to assure the man who was holding him prisoner that he had not broken prison to "run away", but had escaped by fighting.

Ali-Bek received him as a guest. During the past two months, news had spread concerning the captive Tamerlane, the fettered Bahadur (hero), the incarcerated bravest of the brave; and all the nobles who were not hostile to Tamerlane condemned Ali-Bek's behaviour. Ali-Bek's own brother sent gifts for Tamerlane, demanding that he should be set at liberty, and provided with food and horses. Ali-Bek, now furnished with

ocular proof of Tamerlane's chivalry and fortitude, hastened to make good the wrong which had been done.

Soon there were a dozen hardy warriors ready to take up arms, to mount their horses, and share the fate of Tamerlane; for they all knew that as his followers they would win both fame and plunder. Before he had finished crossing the Khwarizmian steppes, he had been joined by fifty Turcomans; two hundred riders came from Khorassan; a leader of a century, who had previously served under Tamerlane, joined him with his soldiers, bringing gifts.

Tamerlane now found himself at the head of a troop which, though small, was apt for any adventure, and he began to form audacious schemes. Nothing less would content him than the conquest of Transoxania. He left Aldshai in a village near Bokhara, where the daughter of Emir Kuzgan intrigued, spied, and fanned the flames of revolt. Tamerlane's emissaries tried to win over the indigenous tribes, while Tamerlane himself, disguised as a mendicant monk, made for Samarkand, intending there, since it was the centre of the Regent's power, to organise an insurrection. He hid himself in his sister's harem. By day and by night his adherents came and went. Arms were collected, warriors were smuggled into the city.

Many ballads have been written about this romantic period in the life of young Tamerlane, and as late as the nineteenth century European travellers in Asia could hear Kirghizes and Siberian Tartars singing them. They are full of admiration for the hero and for his steadfastness in misfortune; they sing the love of the valiant knight, the handsome Tamerlane, for the noble princess, his young wife who, in the Legend of the Wicked Khan, was thrown into the sea in a box, but was rescued by the youthful hero. This knightly figure, created by the popular sentiment out of young Tamerlane and remaining vivid for five centuries, became a model for Asiatic princes. They were half-adventurers, half-artists, trusting in luck and in the favour of Heaven, ready at the risk of life to lose all or win a new realm betwixt night and morning.

Tamerlane's attempted rising was a failure; his presence in the town became known. The Jagatai Mongols were on his trail, and he fled once more with only a few companions. But on this occasion he had adherents dispersed throughout the country. They got together and accompanied him southward across the Amu-Darya into the mountains of Afghanistan where Hosain and the members of Hosain's faction were awaiting him. In all, the pair had now a thousand riders, and were in search of a field of activity; they were condottieri, ready to hire themselves out to any ruler as a fighting force.

An opportunity soon offered. The Emir of Sistan was beset by his neighbours, while the seven fortresses which formed the key of his realm had revolted and closed their gates against him. He was willing to pay any price for aid.

Tamerlane attacked the first fortress by night. From all four sides he began the storm, and within four-and-twenty hours he had taken the place, which contained plentiful stores of grain to become the booty of the victors. The garrison of the second fortress made a sally to fight beneath the walls, but they were driven back through the gates and Tamerlane's warriors were preparing for the attack when the place surrendered.

The third fortress was regarded as impregnable, and the garrison sat at ease behind its high walls. Tamerlane told his men to bring with them casting-nets which, in cavalry combats, were attached to a rope and flung over the enemy from a distance. He had these nets flung to the top of the walls, and the hardy stormers clambered up the ropes. In the grey of dawn they were standing on the top of the walls; they opened the gates, and, to a fanfare of trumpets, the riders entered the city.

After these experiences, the inhabitants of Sistan were ready to recognise the authority of their Emir once more and to surrender the remaining fortresses. "For if Tamerlane takes all the fortresses, he will rob you of Sistan and annihilate us," explained the people's delegate to their chief. Thereupon the Emir stole out of Tamerlane's camp by night, and assembled his subjects to drive out his dangerous ally.

A savage conflict ensued. Tamerlane and his bahadurs were always in the thick of the fight. Twice he was wounded by arrows, once in the leg, and the second time in the right elbow, but he paid no heed. He went on fighting until the enemy was routed. Only then did he become aware of the gravity of his wounds, and retired into the hills to await their healing. But this proved a slow and difficult process. For a long time Tamerlane could make little use of his right arm, and he limped for the rest of his life. His Turkish enemies styled him "Aksak-Timur" (Limping Timur), and the Persians "Timur-i-lenk" (Timur the lame), corrupted by Europeans into Tamerlane.

II

Followed by no more than forty riders, Timur, scarcely cured of his wounds, took to horse again; but all his men were nobles, the sons of princes and emirs, dauntless warriors. They rode northward through the mountain country.

In a valley they encountered a tiger, and Tamerlane wished to try his fortune. He said to himself: "If I succeed in killing the beast, I shall be successful in all I attempt." He drew his bow, and the first arrow slew the tiger on the spot. Animated with fresh courage, the warriors pitched their tents in this valley, and thither came all those who were dissatisfied with the rule of the Jagatai Mongols—adventurers, pugnacious nomads, minor chieftains with their retainers, and larger troops of horse. The arrival of each new group of adherents was celebrated by a carouse. Tamerlane received them with open arms, distributing among them the last of his possessions; giving to one his tunic, to another his costly girdle, to a third his hat decked with jewels.

The army grew apace, and once again Tamerlane was in a position to seize a mountain fortress as a centre for further advances. Then, by a sudden flanking movement, he disconcerted the princes of Badakshan, who could only put a stop to his looting by evasion or the payment of tribute; and at length

he defeated a detachment of the Jagatai Mongols and crossed the Oxus. But when Ilyas, the Regent, sent a large regular army against him, half of the tribes who were following him deserted his flag, and, despite his bravery, the enemy drove him back across the Amu-Darya. For a month the foe remained encamped on the opposite side of the river, which none ventured to cross. But Timur knew that time was on his side, for he was familiar with these adversaries who loved fighting and loot, but lacked patience to go on watching a ford. One day they vanished, leaving the way into Transoxania open to Tamerlane, and immediately the chieftains who had deserted him returned to their allegiance with their followers.

This time Regent Ilyas assembled all his forces, and sent 20,000 men against the invader. Timur had only 6,000. Again the opposing armies faced one another across a river.

Tamerlane sent 2,000 picked men to defend the solitary bridge, and, accompanied by the remainder, he forded the stream lower down during the night. Next morning the enemy could see only the small force on the bridge, and believed that the rest of the army must be ambushed somewhere else. They did not venture to attack until their scouts should have discovered the ambush, so they remained that day inactive. Next night camp-fires were flaming on all the hills in the rear of the Jagatai Mongols. Regent Ilyas believed himself to be surrounded, and, dreading a night attack, he kept his men under arms till dawn. He did not know how large an army was prepared to take him in the rear nor how many men he had to face, so he now ordered a withdrawal from this charmed circle. Next day he had to give battle in a far less favourable position.

The fighting continued for a day and a night. Thanks to the superior strength of his army, despite heavy losses Ilyas was able to maintain his ground. Next day Tamerlane was threatened by annihilation, but now came a new and almost incredible stroke of luck. A messenger from Turkestan rode hot-foot into the enemy camp.

Toghluk Khan, Ilyas' father, was dead.

Something more was at stake for Ilyas than the hazard of a single battle. It was essential that he should get back into Turkestan before a rival claimant should seize the throne.

Tamerlane promptly sent a detachment to his birthplace Shehri-sebs, commanding the horsemen to tie leafy branches on either side of their saddles. The foliage trailed in the dust and the clouds raised by this cavalcade made the inhabitants of the town believe that Tamerlane was approaching with a mighty army, so they evacuated the place while Tamerlane was far away pursuing the fugitives' main army across the Syr-Darya. The chronicle reports: "In this way the favour of fortune enabled Tamerlane to defeat a great army by camp fires and to conquer a city with the aid of a dust-cloud."

III

Transoxania was free again, and Tamerlane and Hosain were its liberators. As was usual among the nomads, the time had come for the two allies to fight for the premier position. But now it appeared that the chieftains who had helped in the work of liberation were disinclined to have any Grand Emir set up over them. They were independent. Each was Lord in his own province. Each of the two rivals must seek supporters to drive the other out of the field, and here Hosain, being grandson of Emir Kuzgan, had the advantage over Tamerlane. Hunting up a poor but pious dervish who was a descendant of Jenghiz Khan, he proclaimed him Khan of Transoxania. This was legally fitting, and in accordance with ancient custom, so most of the chieftains went over to Hosain's side. Tamerlane had to submit, and even to pay the high taxes imposed by Hosain on the provinces. He had been reduced once more to the level of a vassal, but he said no word. When his money did not suffice to defray the taxes, he sent Prince Hosain the jewels and other ornaments of his wife Aldshai, Hosain's sister; and the autobiography records as a sign of the recipient's avarice and greed

that he accepted these trinkets although he must certainly have recognised them.

The pair had no more time to devote to their private quarrel, for it was necessary to join forces and repel a new invasion from Turkestan. Then Princess Aldshai, Tamerlane's much-loved wife and Hosain's sister, died. She had been the only link between this ill-assorted pair. Calculation had drawn them together when they were ambitious youngsters. Tamerlane's swashbuckling pugnacity had been useful to Prince Hosain in expanding his dominions; and Tamerlane, on his side, hoped to climb higher while his "friend" assisted. Then need brought them together again. They fought side by side because they had a common foe, while remaining substantially rivals and enemies. One of them was close-fisted to the pitch of avarice, the other was extravagant; one of them was over-cautious, the other impetuous; and each of them aimed at autocracy. Hosain based his claim on rights inherited from his grandfather; Tamerlane looked to military successes and to good fortune. Towards the end they were inspired by nothing other than "mutual enmity and hatred".

The guerrilla warfare which now ensued was conducted with much spirit, much tactical adroitness, but was devoid of strategy, for it was not guided by any far-reaching plan. The antagonists exhausted themselves in taking a castle here or a town there, and in dispersing an enemy troop whenever they encountered it. The chieftains were continually changing from one side to the other, and neither Hosain nor Tamerlane could see his way to dispensing with this untrustworthy aid. But Hosain was actually the ruler, could put larger forces into the field, and owed his success to the numerical superiority of his troops. Tamerlane always led his own men, and gained victories by personal valour, by his ruses, his strokes of genius, and not least his good luck. The taking of Karshi in Bokhara is regarded in the history of the East as a signal example of Tamerlane's qualities.

He himself had had the fortifications of Karshi built, providing the place with strong walls and deep moats, but it had passed

into the possession of Hosain, and was occupied by Hosain's forces under the command of Mussa, an elderly and experienced general. Tamerlane had just bestowed his wives and his treasures in a safe place and was on the way back to Karshi when he learned that Mussa had occupied the town with a force of 12,000 men. Tamerlane was in command of barely a tenth of that number.

Feigning to have renounced the idea of reconquering Karshi, he led his men along the great caravan route towards Khorassan. Spreading a report that he intended to conquer Herat, he crossed the Amu-Darya, having sent envoys to the ruler of Herat bearing presents and assurances of his pacific intentions. In the flats beside the Amu on the great caravan route he stayed for two months, and passed the time in hunting until a big caravan travelling from Herat to Samarkand by way of Karshi passed by his camp. He asked the leader of this caravan for precise information about Herat, the strength of its garrison, and the condition of the fortifications, and then, at the head of his main force, broke camp and marched southward.

When the caravan resumed its journey to Karshi one of Tamerlane's spies went with it, and, while the main body was instructed to re-encamp a little farther to the south, Tamerlane himself, taking with him only two hundred and forty picked and trusted warriors, slowly followed the caravan, riding by devious tracks through forests. Any wayfarers this troop encountered were impounded and taken along, lest they should betray what Tamerlane and his men were doing.

When the caravan entered Karshi, its leader, as Tamerlane had expected, talked about the meeting with him beside the Amu-Darya, and how he had set out for Herat. Mussa, believing that at length a chance had come of taking Tamerlane by surprise, and, by capturing him, putting an end to this persistent rivalry, left a small force in occupation of Karshi and hastened with the bulk of his men southward towards Herat, determined to encircle the enemy as soon as the siege of Herat began. Meanwhile Tamerlane reached a wood near Karshi, and concealed his men

in this hiding-place while setting them to work upon the construction of scaling-ladders.

One night, alone except for one manservant, he rode to the fortified city. The moat was full of water, but an aqueduct led across it. Wading knee-deep in this conduit, Tamerlane reached the wall. He knew a postern-gate and went up to it, but when he tapped on the outside he found it had been walled up from within. Then he made the circuit of the town immediately beneath the wall to discover the best places for his scaling-ladders, and, having done so, returned to camp.

That same night one hundred men with scaling-ladders crossed the moat by the aqueduct, while Tamerlane, with another hundred, rode up to the gates of the town. Forty followed with spare horses and baggage. Noiselessly in the darkness the hundred bahadurs scaled the walls, rushed through the streets, cut down the guardians of the gates and opened these. Before dawn Tamerlane with the additional hundred was in the town. He had the drums beaten, the trumpets blown, and, in panic terror, "as if an earthquake had occurred, paralysed by fear, the enemy hid themselves wherever they could, in sheds and barns." The house where Mussa's son lived was fired, and those who bolted from the flames were seized. Before sunrise, the whole place was in Tamerlane's hands.

Tamerlane's followers now called him "Sahib Kiran"—the Lord of the Favourable Constellation. Since his lucky star had made him master of Karshi, he would surely be able to hold the place, even though Mussa returned with an army of 12,000 to besiege it. With undiminished courage and confidence the garrison made sallies whenever and wherever Tamerlane directed, its tiny force impetuously entering the enemy camp, disturbing Mussa and his men by day and by night, inflicting serious losses, capturing horses and disappearing as soon as the resistance became too strong—to regain the shelter of the walled town in safety. The incessant excursions of the indefatigable bahadurs made them seem far more numerous than they really were, and Mussa's losses were promoted by Tamerlane's policy.

Every chieftain taken prisoner was hospitably entertained, given presents, set at liberty—to return, if he pleased, to Mussa, or to stay in Tamerlane's service. The chieftains, with their retainers, swelled Tamerlane's army. At length the remaining chieftains did not wait to be taken. They, too, had come to believe in Tamerlane's star and deserted to his banner. When now, in one of the sallies, Mussa was wounded, he raised the siege and withdrew across the Amu-Darya.

This was the turning-point. To begin with there was no change in the character of the struggle, which went on in the form of raids by dauntless horsemen, the heroic deeds of flying detachments which could have no permanent effect, and could not bring about a definitive result. But more and more towns were occupied by Tamerlane, more and more fortresses were taken by surprise, so that it became increasingly difficult for Hosain to get together big armies and reconquer the lost domains. Before going into action, Tamerlane fired his troops by saying to them: "Now is a time of festival for warriors. You know that a hero's place of rejoicing is the battlefield, that the songs one sings there are war-cries, and that the wine one drinks is the blood of the foe." He led them from battle to battle, from victory to victory, having the courage to retreat when retreat was expedient, to surrender a stronghold he had just conquered, to take refuge in deserts or hill country where a superior force could not easily follow him—to return and inflict a new blow as soon as a favourable opportunity offered. Each success magnified his fame.

When, at length, two Emirs who were relatives of the Khan of Jagatai went over to Tamerlane with 7,000 Jagatai Mongols, the struggle for supremacy between the rivals was settled. Wherever Hosain's warriors saw the Mongolian banners in their adversary's ranks, they fled, and Tamerlane was soon able to besiege his enemy at Balkh. After a long and desperate struggle, "Hosain closed behind himself the gates of the citadel he had built there, determined, being hopeless, to renounce his fortune and his dignity. Filled with pain and sorrow, he dis-

crowned himself, renounced his possessions, and begged only for permission to depart upon a pilgrimage to Mecca." To this Tamerlane agreed. But Tamerlane's Emirs were afraid that they might have cause to repent missing an opportunity, so "by depriving Hosain of his life they made it impossible for him to persist in fomenting disorder and to begin a new war."

The chronicler writes: "In the Book of Fate was written the hour and the place preordained for Hosain, and no man can alter his destiny."

CHAPTER XXVIII

LORD OF TRANSOXANIA

I

BY the law of the Yasak, only a descendant of Jenghiz could become Khan, and Tamerlane, having conquered all his enemies and got possession of Transoxania, induced the chieftains, in accordance with ancient Mongolian custom, to elect him ruler and to swear fealty to him—but the title he adopted was only that of Emir el Kebir, the Great Emir. He appointed as Khan a descendant of Jenghiz, Syurhatmish, ruling in that worthy's name, which appeared on the coins minted by Tamerlane.

Transoxania had always been part of Jagatai's fief, but Syurhatmish was not a descendant of Jagatai, who had ruled over only part of the Mongolian Empire, being of the line of Ogatai, the first Great Khan of the Mongols, and he could therefore be regarded as the legitimate heir of all the realms that had ever been ruled over by Mongols.

Tamerlane was the Emir of Transoxania, and the chieftains who swore fealty to him believed him to have reached the goal of his wishes, his ambitions, for never had an Emir been mightier than he. But the man of five-and-thirty with the olive-tinted face, and, despite his youth, with white hair, whom they had now placed on the throne was only at the beginning of his career. He alone knew why he had revived Jenghiz Khan's forgotten decree that the ruler of the Mongols should be elected by a kuriltai, a full assembly of chieftains; and why he had chosen to appoint a Khan of Ogatai's stock. The tradition of Jenghiz Khan was still alive in the soul of every nomad. It was the tradition of a superhuman ascent to power, of a divine

dominion over the world; and the tribes, whether Mongolian, Tartar, or Turkish, that had preserved their ties with the Central Asiatic steppes from which they sprang, cherished dreams of a return to their sometime greatness.

Very few of them had retained the Shamanist faith, for most had by now been converted to Mohammedanism, Lamaism, or Christianity; but for one and all of them it seemed true that—faith apart—they were brothers. They were continually making war on one another, robbing one another, slaying one another; but that they had done since time immemorial. It was a struggle among equals to obtain supreme power, each hoping to secure the largest piece of the old Khanates and impose over it his uncontested rule. They were merely reviving their ancient rights. That was the feeling of every Khan of Turkestan who invaded Transoxania, of every Emir who made incursions into Afghanistan. Tamerlane, the great calculator and chess-player who knew all the rules of the game of military and political sovereignty, wished to take advantage of these rights, for now, when he controlled Transoxania, his immeasurable ambition continued to flutter before his eyes the vision of the greatest of all achievements. Whereas no Khan of his days had ever dreamed of anything so great as the complete re-establishment of one of the partial empires of the Jenghizides, Tamerlane, “born under a happy star and predestined to world dominion,” hoped to reunite the whole Mongolian Empire under his sceptre.

That was why he chose a descendant of Ogatai to become Khan, as heir of the whole vast realm. That was why he resuscitated the Yasak while adapting it in various ways to extant conditions; and that was why he sought support from the old-established faith of Islam. For when Jenghiz Khan set out upon his career of world-conquest, he left in his native land, in Mongolia, none but members of his own people, none but Mongols. Tamerlane had to conduct his wars with forces composed of Turanian horsemen; and as soon as he left the boundaries of his native land Transoxania he would leave in the towns and in the countryside people of a very different

stamp, Iranians, pious Moslems, who hated the Yasak no less than they hated the unbelievers who oppressed them, these being regarded as no more than half-Mohammedans even after conversion. To bind the population to him, Tamerlane had to win over the priesthood, must present himself before them as the protector and diffuser of Islam.

"I chose from among the descendants of the Prophet one of the most distinguished, to whom I gave full authority over the Moslems. In his hands was the administration of the possessions of the Church; he appointed the mullahs, decided who in the towns and villages should become muftis (expounders of the Law), decreed who should be chiefs of the markets, the men who should control weights and measures and see to the supply of the necessities of life. He determined the appointments and prebends of the Saids (the descendants of the Prophet), of the priests, and of other persons of merit." This was something more than the autonomy of the Church, it was the surrender of the whole public life of the indigenous population into the hands of spiritual princes. Thenceforward the priestly caste stood as one man behind Tamerlane; every mullah, every dervish, was a whole-hearted adherent, a trustworthy and experienced spy.

Thus did the great calculator establish his realm upon two different and mutually hostile elements of the population, and upon two conflicting law-books. He divided society into twelve classes, those of the highest rank being not the generals and the ministers of State, but the Saids, the sheiks, and the ulemas, men distinguished for their wisdom and their piety, but all that concerned the army and the nomadic tribes was taken out of the province of the Koran, for in this domain only the Yasak held sway. Tamerlane actually appointed a special judge "to regulate disputes between the soldiers and other subjects."

He surrounded himself with the splendour and the luxury of the rulers of Iran, assembling their sages, their poets, and their artists; he recited their verses; in accordance with the Iranian

ideal of beauty, he had himself painted with a white skin, rosy cheeks, and a thick black beard; while he never adopted any of the customary Islamic appellations of the sovereign, such as "Protector of the Faithful", "The Blessed", the "Light of the Faith". No doubt he changed his title from time to time as his empire continued to expand, but he remained all the time a true follower of the Yasak, and bridled his ambitions, for though he ultimately assumed the title of Sultan, he never took that of Khan. When his puppet-Khan Syurhatmish died, Tamerlane appointed as successor Syurhatmish's son Mahmud.

His successors and his biographers tried to make out that Tamerlane was a Moslem zealot, a fanatic who effected conquests in order to convert all peoples to Islam. But most of Tamerlane's campaigns were carried on against orthodox Mohammedans, against Sultans who could rightly style themselves "Fighters for the Faith". His personal attitude towards Islam remained throughout one of Mongol tolerance and indifference. He never had his head shaved; he wore a gold-inlaid helmet or a lofty, pointed Tartar hat bedecked with jewels, instead of a turban; drank wine; allowed his wives to go about unveiled and to take part in all festivities. No doubt he had mosques built, visited holy places, and posed as the "Protector of Islam"; but much of this may have been mere policy, the governmental art of a man who was animated by the loftiest ambition possible to an Asiatic sovereign, that of reconstituting the Empire of Jenghiz Khan.

Tamerlane's dream was to be a new, a Moslem Jenghiz Khan. This was his obsession, which he pursued throughout life with fanaticism and sanctimoniousness, with audacity and cunning, with cruelty intertwined with a chivalrous spirit. The passion never left him under the burning sun of Syria, or in the ice-bound plains of Russia; never left him amid the febrile fantasies of a sick-bed or when, as a half-blind old man, he set out upon the last and greatest campaign of his life.

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II

A whole decade elapsed after Hosain's death before Tamerlane got seriously to work upon the realisation of his great scheme. These ten years were occupied in five wars against Turkestan, in four campaigns against Khwarizm on the lower waters of the Amu-Darya, and in suppressing revolts at home. Again and again did Tamerlane emerge from the Fergana Valley to cross the passes into Eastern Turkestan or into Semirychensk, smiting the nomadic tribes, destroying their hordes, carrying off their cattle, and driving them eastward. Again and again did he march down the Amu-Darya, devastate the orchards of the flats, and lay the towns waste. On each occasion he personally led his army, fought in all the battles, and each time his victorious march was interrupted by some outbreak of revolt at home—for the Emirs and the tribal chieftains continued to find it monstrous that one who for so long had been a man of their ilk should now have made himself absolute ruler. They conspired against him, tried to seize his person, but each time he evaded the onslaught, broke up the conspiracy.

"I overwhelmed them with gifts and lavishness; I gave those who aspired to success the governorship of provinces; I did not spare gold and jewels. But in order to keep them vacillating betwixt fear and hope, I gave each of them a viceroy."

An elaborate network of espionage surrounded them, keeping Tamerlane well informed, and enabling him to intervene at the right moment. "The art of government consists, in part, of patience and firmness, and in part of simulated indifference with a talent for seeming not to know what one knows." Seldom did he punish, but when he punished it was always with death. Anyone who begged forgiveness and was ready to swear fidelity again, could count upon being pardoned, was re-accepted into favour, for Tamerlane needed the chieftains, needed their powerful support, and he knew that he possessed a magic key with which, in the end, he could induce them to

tender unconditional devotion and make them fanatical in their dependence—the conquest of Iran.

Thus he spent a decade safeguarding his frontiers, while struggling for general recognition that he was a lawful sovereign. Tamerlane disclosed a taste for enjoying the splendours of sovereign authority. His artists and scholars accompanied him when he took the field; and he adopted all the refinements of Western Asiatic life. He would lay siege to a town, and when the first melons were brought to him from the fruit-gardens of the environs, he would send one on a golden platter to his adversary in the fortress, “for it would signify a lack of courtesy not to share the new fruit with the prince when one is so close a neighbour.” He made war, but he tried to form ties with his opponent. He connected himself by marriage with the conquered Khan of Jagatai; he forced the rulers of Khwarizm to give Princess Han-Sadeh (far famed for her beauty) to his son Jehangir in marriage; and saw to it that the reception of the princess and the wedding festival should be marked by a pomp such as Transoxania had not previously known. The roads were decked with carpets and brocades; the streets were sprinkled with flowers; agreeable scents were sprayed in the cities.

There was an unending succession of festivities at the court of Tamerlane. Every return from a campaign was marked by a banquet; every victory, every marriage, every birth of a prince was celebrated by the founding of some stately building. From each town he summoned the most famous artists, the most skilled handicraftsmen, that his capital Samarkand and his birth-place Shehri-sebs (which he bestowed upon his favourite son Jehangir as a fief) might be beautified. The country was beginning to forget the horrors of the war, the devastations wrought by the mutual struggles of the chieftains, and it flourished abundantly.

At length Tamerlane was able, having summoned his chieftains to a solemn kuriltai, to announce amid universal jubilation that he intended to march westward against Iran. For just as two centuries before in the eyes of the nomads of Mongolia

China had been their ideal of the great world, so now was Persia the same for the tribes of Transoxania. Notwithstanding the havoc that had been wrought, notwithstanding centuries of exploitation, Persia was still the promised land full of treasures and enjoyments. The man who should lead them thither they would follow blindly, with unconditional obedience, ready for any hardship, every sacrifice.

III

Herat was ruled by a native prince, Giyas-ed-Din. In youth, Tamerlane had fought against him, when helping Emir Kuzgan to subjugate the neighbouring territories. Now he invited Giyas-ed-Din to come to the kuriltai, this implying a declaration that the Lord of Herat was Tamerlane's vassal. Having informed the envoy of his delight at receiving so honourable an invitation, Giyas-ed-Din began to strengthen the walls of Herat and to extend the fortifications. Tamerlane invaded the principality, took some of the lesser strongholds, and invested the capital. The inhabitants were preparing for defence when Tamerlane sent a message to the Prince saying, that unless there should be a voluntary surrender he would utterly destroy this town, which had a population of a quarter of a million, was a venerable centre of the sciences with hundreds of schools, whose culture was witnessed by the existence of thousands of bath-houses, whose prosperity was furthered by tens of thousands of shops and workshops; he would raze the walls to the ground and massacre the whole population. The petty prince, who, having no allies, could not hope to withstand for any considerable time the overwhelming strength of Transoxania, "put his pride in his pocket, and, kneeling, kissed the imperial carpet."

The rulers of Khorassan, belonging to the fanatical order of the Sserbedars, declared themselves willing to acknowledge Tamerlane's supremacy as soon as the conqueror appeared on their frontiers. He invaded Masenderan, and had merely taken

the first fortresses, when the Emir hastened to pay homage. An embassy was being sent by Shah Hodsha, the cunning elderly sovereign of Ispahan, Fars, and Kerman—of all South Persia in short. He knew what would be the outcome of a raid into his beautiful and wealthy country, and so, being too old to enter upon a fight, he anticipated Tamerlane by sending valuable presents and begging for the conqueror's protection. Thus in a single campaign Tamerlane made himself overlord of all the eastern half of Persia.

His gaze was being directed farther afield, and he sought fresh booty. In the south his empire extended to the mountain frontiers of Afghanistan. Had he not, in youth, nearly made himself sovereign of Sistan? Was it not from the mountains of Afghanistan that he had started on the road to power? The governor of Kabul "had the honour of kissing the imperial carpet"; but beyond this potentate's realm Tamerlane encountered mountain tribes who were resolved to defend their independence; and while he was employed in subjugating them revolt broke out in the recently conquered land of Eastern Persia. In Herat and in Khorassan the populace took up arms, massacred the garrisons, killed the governors whom Tamerlane had appointed, and fortified the towns. The conqueror had to begin his conquests over again.

At the news of the rising, he stayed his march into the mountains, and took a terrible vengeance. For the first time in his campaigns he showed himself to be a "hurricane of annihilation". For the first time he commanded cruelty and devastation such as made people shudder even in those cruel days, and surrounded for all time the name of Tamerlane with the gloomy aureole of the butcher and exterminator. When he stormed the rebellious city of Sabzevar, the capital of Khorassan, he had 2,000 persons walled up alive, as a tower of horror "for a warning to all who should dare to revolt and as an indication of Tamerlane's vengeance"—this being the first time that he had commanded such an act. The sword of the executioner made an end of the dynasty of Herat; the towns of the Sserbedars

became heaps of ruin. Then Tamerlane returned to the mountains of Afghanistan to take up his work of conquest at the point where it had been interrupted.

The mountain cities, which defended themselves valiantly, were crowned with pyramids of skulls; and in the capital city of Sistan, which also made a strenuous resistance, after the prince had surrendered to Tamerlane, the inhabitants were put to the sword by the conqueror, "even to the centenarians, and to the baby in the cradle." Then the soldiers carried off everything "down to the nails from the doors"; and whatever was combustible went up in flames. City after city, fortress after fortress, fell into the hands of the conquerors "until there were no more enemies left in these provinces, and no one who did not obey Tamerlane."

Then Tamerlane gave his soldiers and their officers three months' rest, before he levied his army anew, and "hardly had his troops recrossed the Amu-Darya than all the realms of Iran were terror-stricken." Futile were the measures of precaution taken by the Emir of Masenderan, at whom the first blow was struck; fruitless were his bravery and his wiles. Tamerlane seemed to foresee all possible dangers. His army was invariably in a secure position, ready for instant action; traps laid for him retaliated on those who had set them—until the Emir, driven from one stronghold to another, at length fled discouraged to the west. Pursuing him, Tamerlane invaded Western Persia, the realm of Sultan Ahmed. He took the ancient royal city of Rai, the glorious Sultaniah built by Ilkhan Ghazan, and was already invading Azerbaijan, whither the Emir and the Sultan had fled, when he unexpectedly had to face a new and mighty opponent, Toktamish, Khan of the Golden Horde.

IV

At the date when Tamerlane, having just elevated himself to the dignity of Emir el Kebir, the Great Emir, was consoli-

dating and safeguarding his youthful power by his campaign against Khwarizm and Turkestan, the eastern parts of the decaying Golden Horde had split away and become known as the White Horde. Its energetic Khan Urus had, in his struggle for rule over the whole country, destroyed one local Khanate after another, and at length had conquered his own nephew Toktamish. Toktamish fled to Tamerlane. The latter, recognising that this was an opportunity which might never recur, seized his chance of interfering in the destinies of the great Mongolian realm to the north. If Toktamish, the Jenghizide, was prepared to pay him homage, and regained the Khanship as his vassal, he, Tamerlane, would become liege-lord of the White and later perhaps of the whole Golden Horde. Toktamish was ready enough to swear fealty.

He was received with honour, and was given valuable presents, being supplied with tents, horses, camels, and slaves. A few border tribes having been placed under him, he marched with them against Urus Khan, and was defeated. Tamerlane gave him a yet larger army, and again he was soundly beaten. For the third time he fled to Tamerlane, and was for the third time received hospitably and richly rewarded.

On this occasion, however, almost simultaneously with Toktamish's envoys there arrived an embassy from Urus Khan, demanding that the Emir of Transoxania should promptly hand over the fugitive, and acquainting him with the fact that the Khan was approaching in person at the head of a great army. Tamerlane commanded his warriors to occupy all the roads to the north, then the envoys were arrogantly dismissed, and while they were on their way back to Urus they were followed by unseen patrols. Tamerlane himself took the same direction with his main army, made a surprise onslaught on Urus' horde and put it to flight.

Not long after this, Urus died, and his son, unwarlike, caring only for enjoyment, submitted to Toktamish, and was executed by the latter. No one now dared to resist the new Khan, who was backed up by Tamerlane. All the chieftains came to pay him

homage, and, as soon as he had got firm possession of the eastern territories, he crossed the Volga and the Don to subdue the whole of the Golden Horde.

Mamai Khan, who had just been routed beside the Don by the united armies of the Russian princes, was not yet strong enough to resist the onslaught of Toktamish. Having been defeated, he fled to Crimea to seek refuge among the Genoese, and was there slain. In barely five years, Toktamish, who had been a helpless and impecunious fugitive without friends and without supporters, had made himself Khan of the whole Golden Horde, thus becoming one of the mightiest rulers in the world.

In order to re-establish the ancient prestige of his empire, he undertook a punitive expedition against the Russian princes who, still exhausted by their struggle against Mamai, were hardly in a position for effective defence. "Columns of smoke and fire which arose from the flaming crops and villages heralded by day and by night the approach of the Mongolian army." The Grand Princedom of Muscovy was the aim. After four days' siege Moscow was taken and burned. Seven additional towns of the Grand Princedom shared the fate of the capital, and so did other princedoms, such as Ryazan. By the time Toktamish got back to his capital Sarai, all the Russian princes had renewed their vassalage to the Khan and pledged themselves to pay yearly tribute; and the sons of the leading princes were hostages in Toktamish's camp. The battle of Kulikovo had been fought in vain, the will of the Khan prevailed without limit from the Sea of Aral to the west of the Dnieper, the Venetian and Genoese colonies in Crimea asked for new commercial treaties, and the coins which were minted in the name of Toktamish bore the inscription: "The Just Khan, the Helper of Religion and of the World."

Was he, now that he was the ruler of Russian Grand Princes and of vast territories and numberless peoples, a descendant of Jenghiz Khan, the rightful heir of Juji's fief, to endure any longer the arrogant pretensions of a mere Emir of the province of Transoxania? Was not Tamerlane a usurper who had got

possession of lands which belonged to the heirs of Jenghiz Khan—Turkestan, the domain of the successors of Jagatai, and Iran, the domain of the successors of Hulagu? When Tamerlane now invaded Azerbaijan, a country which the Khans of the Golden Horde had coveted for a century-and-a-half, Toktamish sent an army over the Caucasus to stay the invader's progress.

The two advance-guards met, and forty of Tamerlane's officers were slain. Tamerlane commanded the bold Miran Shah, his third son, to avenge the defeat, and Miran Shah, having routed the enemy, chased them as far as the pass of Derbent, which was the real frontier of the Golden Horde. Having taken prisoner some of Toktamish's most distinguished followers, he brought them in chains to his father. But Tamerlane set them free, and sent them to the Khan bearing paternal reproaches and exhortations: "Why is it that you, a prince whom I look upon as my son, should without cause overrun this land with war and try to bring thousands of Moslems to destruction? You should henceforward avoid such unseemly behaviour, faithfully fulfil the treaties you have made with me, and not awaken slumbering dissensions."

When Tamerlane thus endeavoured to restore the good understanding with Toktamish, he showed himself an unskilful diplomatist, for he had cleared up the situation once for all, and after receipt of this message the Khan of the Golden Horde could contemplate no other possibility than war. The phrase "whom I regard as my son" signified that the Emir, the usurper, looked upon Toktamish, the Khan of the Golden Horde, as a feudatory prince, and himself as that prince's liege-lord. Toktamish therefore began to make ready for the great struggle, to seek allies, and to discover an opportunity for breaking Tamerlane's power.

Heedlessly Tamerlane continued his campaign of conquest through Iran, defeated those troops of Sultan Ahmed which remained in Azerbaijan when Ahmed himself had fled to Bagdad, invaded Georgia, and stormed its capital Tiflis. Georgia

was a Christian country, so Tamerlane declared that he was waging a Holy War for the faith of the Prophet, compelled the king of Georgia to come over to Islam, and commanded his troops, as combatants for the True Faith, to besiege and destroy all the mountain strongholds of the petty princes, for it was pleasing to Allah that the faithful should annihilate the unbelievers. Whenever a fortress was taken, those within were flung from the battlements into the moat, and the heaps of corpses sometimes rose to such a height that the last to be thrown over were no longer killed by the fall but lay with broken limbs to perish miserably. Flourishing provinces were transformed into death-stricken solitudes.

From Georgia, Tamerlane led his men into Kurdistan, where they fought no less savagely, although Kurdistan was peopled by Moslems, Turcoman tribes, vassals of Sultan Ahmed. Their chieftain Kara Yussuf resisted for a while, but then, being hopelessly outnumbered, withdrew with his tents and his cattle into inaccessible ravines, or even to the very tops of the mountains.

Once again it was the bold Miran Shah who rode hither and thither through this hill-country, defeating tribe after tribe and conquering peak after peak, while Tamerlane, with the main body, was already devastating Armenia.

While he was there, tidings reached him that old Hodsha, the Shah of Southern Persia, was dead. Instantly messengers were sent to the Shah's heirs ordering them to appear before Tamerlane and pay homage; but "since fortune and prosperity had turned their faces from these rulers," they hesitated to reply, and Tamerlane promptly invaded Southern Persia. The country which the crafty old Shah had, by his timely gifts, preserved from the horrors of war was now to experience them in full force.

V

Ispahan, the great city lying amid orchards and lovely villages, after its Shah had fled to join his nephew Mansur in the wild

mountain country of Khuzistan, surrendered to the conqueror without striking a blow. The elders of the city understood that nothing but the payment of a high indemnity could save the lives of the inhabitants, and did not try useless bargaining. Tamerlane named the sum he required, appointed a force of occupation, and divided the quarters of the town among the Emirs who were to collect the money and the jewels. But the inhabitants of Ispahan could not understand why they were expected to hand over almost all the valuables they possessed. Raising a riot, they first dispatched the Emirs, and then massacred the whole garrison. Three thousand of Tamerlane's soldiers were butchered, and the gates of the city were barricaded.

Instantly Tamerlane turned back with his army and took Ispahan by storm. After his soldiers had clambered over the walls, he sent a detachment to protect the dwellings of the scholars and the priests, and then commanded his 70,000 men to bring him the heads of 70,000 inhabitants of Ispahan.

Even in Tamerlane's army there were soldiers whose gorge rose at the thought of decapitating unresisting persons, and many preferred to buy a head from some less scrupulous comrade. In this army overladen with spoils, money was cheap, so the price was fixed at one gold piece per head. But the supply so greatly exceeded the demand that the price of a head fell to half a gold piece, and soon no one would buy any more human heads. Tamerlane was supplied with the 70,000 he demanded, and they were piled in pyramids along the top of the wall.

The assize of Ispahan had its due effect. Shiraz, the capital of Southern Persia, celebrated by the immortal poet Hafiz as the city of roses and pleasure, did not attempt resistance, and, within a few days, produced the required indemnity. From all the local princedoms, the rulers hastened to pay homage to Tamerlane.

Only the Shah of Ispahan was unable to come, for his nephew Mansur had robbed him of his army and thrown him into prison; and Mansur himself would not come, believing himself safe even from a Tamerlane in the wild ravines of Khuzistan.

The war had now lasted three years, but Tamerlane took his time. He held festival in the plain of Shiraz, received homage, distributed territories and provinces.

In Shiraz lived the greatest of Persian poets, Hafiz. For the sake of his "dear Shiraz" he had renounced the treasures offered him by an Indian sultan if he would settle in the latter's realm, and for love of Hafiz the most beautiful maiden of Shiraz had renounced the favour of the Shah. For the sake of his native city he wrote the couplet:

O Shiraz, my beloved, I lay my heart in thy hand,
And fling at thy dear feet, Bokhara and Samarkand.

But Samarkand and Bokhara were the capitals of Transoxania. Tamerlane had made them the two chief centres of the Western Asiatic world, summoning thither the best artists and the most adroit handicraftsmen from all the lands he had conquered, and adorning them with the most splendid buildings. He considered that his creations were being slighted. The upshot was a meeting between this oriental conqueror and the poet more than four centuries before the meeting of Napoleon and Goethe in Weimar.

"How dared you fling at the feet of Shiraz, the whore, two cities which, after years of effort, I conquered with the might of my sword, beautified by the labours of the best artists, and uplifted above all the cities in the world?" asked Tamerlane.

The king of poets, who, to manifest his humility and worthlessness in face of the ruler of the world, had appeared in a poor, insignificant dress, reflected for a moment, and then, making a gesture of excuse towards his clothing, said:

"It was the same spendthrift tendency, Grand Emir, which brought me to this pass."

Tamerlane, who had intended to display his wrath, could not but laugh. The adventures of the poet with the light-loving beauties of Shiraz were common talk. Nor would Tamerlane be outshone by anyone as a spendthrift, so he did not merely

grant the poet a forfeited life, but overwhelmed him with valuables.

They parted well-contented each with the other.

But the pen of Hafiz was not for sale. During the brief period through which he outlived this interview, he sang the praises, not of Tamerlane, but of Tamerlane's enemy, the valiant Shah Mansur.

CHAPTER XXIX

WAR AGAINST TOKTAMISH

I

THE caravan route between Shiraz and Samarkand extended over a distance of more than 1,500 miles, and the messenger who brought evil tidings to Tamerlane covered the stretch in seventeen days.

Toktamish, the Khan of the Golden Horde, had crossed the Syr-Darya and invaded Transoxania. Simultaneously the Khwarizmians along the lower course of the Amu-Darya had risen in revolt. Also the Jagatai Mongols had climbed the mountain passes and made their way into the Fergana Valley, for their Khan hoped that in alliance with Toktamish he would be able to regain control of the old frontier land and extend his dominion to the farther side of the Syr-Darya.

The swiftness of Tamerlane's rides has become proverbial. The chroniclers relate that in days he could cover distances which others needed weeks to traverse—on this occasion his progress was marked by the corpses of horses that had dropped dead from exhaustion. Before any of his enemies could get near Samarkand, he was in Transoxania.

His sudden appearance produced the effect of a surprise attack. No one had expected him, and Toktamish, who, hoping for an easy prey, had levied no more than frontier tribes, hastily retreated into his steppes, the Jagatai Mongols vanished back across the mountains, and there was nothing left for Tamerlane to do but chastise the Khwarizmians while his sons purged the valleys of the east from the last Turkistan raiders, and, in the west, took the first opportunity of showing the disaffected

townsmen of Khorassan that they had better keep quiet. In these activities, the summer was spent.

Tamerlane's chieftains were about to settle into winter quarters and enjoy a well-earned rest when news came from the north of the country that a mighty army had appeared at Khojend and had begun to cross the Syr-Darya. This was Toktamish's surprising counter-thrust, his answer to Tamerlane. It was the habit of the nomads of Iran and Transoxania to make war only when their horses could find green fodder, and when they themselves would not freeze if they stayed in the open. But the Mongols from the north had preserved the habit of waging winter campaigns. Their mounts were descended from those unexacting Mongolian horses which neither in summer nor winter know the taste of oats or the comfort of stalls, and which find food for themselves by scraping away the snow with their hoofs. Toktamish was determined to make the most of these natural advantages.

He had calculated sagely. It was an ice-bound winter. The snow lay three feet deep; and the commanders whom Tamerlane instantly summoned to a kuriltai were all in favour of waiting. If the Grand Emir were at this season to summon the warriors out of the remote districts, the horses would be exhausted and unfitted for battle before they arrived. The best plan would be to shut themselves up in the fortresses, for there was little provender to be obtained in the open country, and by the time Toktamish had stormed the strongholds the spring would have come again. Then they could assemble the army.

But neither Toktamish nor the army commanders knew Tamerlane. He would not wait. He had a saying: "It is better to be at the right place with one hundred men than to be somewhere else with ten thousand." Such forces as he had in the neighbourhood were instantly summoned. At the head of this little army, Tamerlane rode through the snow, which reached to the breasts of the horses, against Toktamish, while his son Omar-Sheik led another troop from Fergana down the Syr-Darya.

Then Tamerlane, leaving the way into the middle of the country open to Toktamish, made flanking movements by which his two little armies cut the invaders off from the Syr-Darya.

Toktamish was expecting Tamerlane's onslaught from the interior of Transoxania, but the scouts he sent thither brought no tidings of an army. Instead, he saw two small detachments which, having outflanked him, were endeavouring to press in between him and the river. This feint of Tamerlane's had the desired effect. Toktamish could only suppose that the invading forces were intended to encircle him and hold him in play until Tamerlane's main army could make a frontal attack. But he dared not venture to have his retreat cut off, or to be forced away from the Syr-Darya, so he preferred to order a retreat of his whole mighty army.

While his troops were in disorder crossing the river, Tamerlane assailed them, routed them, pursued them into the steppes northward of Otrar, and returned to Samarkand as victor. Transoxania had again been preserved from the terror of a hostile invasion.

II

Himself a nomad chieftain, Tamerlane was aware that a civilised country with wealthy towns, strongly developed industries, and vigorous trade was a perpetual lure to nomads, and must sooner or later become their prey should it limit itself to the defensive. For the nomads could at any time overrun it, plunder it, weaken it, and at the first sign of resistance withdraw into the steppes almost without loss. Against them, offence was the only effective defence; the war must be carried into their own country. For this tactic most civilised realms, with their cumbrous armies mainly destined for struggles within their own frontiers, were ill adapted. But his army was just as swift, just as mobile, just as agile, as were the troops of his foes. Indeed, he excelled them, for they were hampered by their

hordes, by their families, their tilt-carts, and their cattle, whereas he needed only cavalry contingents for his raids. He resolved, therefore, to attack Toktamish in the latter's own territories.

Never before had Tamerlane taken any war so seriously, and never had he made such comprehensive preparations. He did not know how far from Transoxania this campaign would lead him, nor could he tell how long the war would last. During his absence, his country must be safeguarded against surprises, and he had recently had proof how little dependence he could place upon his immediate environments, for during his punitive expedition against the Khwarizmians his own son-in-law had quarrelled with him, and had left the country with the soldiers subject to his command. Tamerlane had this mal-content followed, taken prisoner, and put to death.

His officers had grown rich and comfortable upon the loot of numerous campaigns. Tamerlane summoned them all to a *kuriltai*, and decreed that in future each of them must bring a larger force into the field. Therewith he gave them higher rank; but since every one of them had to provide for the care and payment of the soldiers under his command, he simultaneously increased their expenses, made it necessary for them to think of fresh spoils—and inasmuch as every high officer had to provide more soldiers he increased the general strength of his army.

But this was not enough. It was necessary to secure the flanks of Transoxania. As spring went on, Tamerlane led his troops across the mountains into Turkestan and into Semiryechnik. Radiating like a fan in all directions, the detachments systematically laid the country waste, scattered every tribe they came across, drove off the cattle, advanced beyond Kashgar and Alma-lik hunting the Khan and his warriors into Zungaria and across the Irtysh. Turkestan was now free from enemies, but a few dangerous tribes might have escaped his attention, so next spring Tamerlane again sent his generals across the mountains. After a few months there came from them a report that they could no longer find any warrior tribes, and were returning. They

were riding homeward over the passes, when they encountered fresh troops of Tamerlane's on the way back to Turkestan once more, "to find the tribes which the first generals had failed to discover."

This thoroughness was successful. Emissaries came from the Jagatai Khan tendering submission. By the union of Turkestan with Transoxania the whole Central Asiatic Empire of Jagatai had been re-established, and all Tamerlane's warriors, no matter to what tribe they might belong, henceforward proudly called themselves "Jagatai".

III

At length, in the third year, all the preparations had been made. Tamerlane had won over three princes of Juji's race, enemies of Toktamish. They wanted to go with him on this campaign, believing they could find support among the tribes subject to the Golden Horde. As adviser he took with him a Khan of Nogai's race, who ruled over the Crimean Mongols—for Crimea had also been part of Juji's fief. He had dispatched his generals to make a levy of men in all the provinces. They must leave no one behind who was fit to bear arms. Each warrior had to provide himself with supplies sufficient for one year, with a bow, thirty arrows, a quiver, and a shield. The armourers had been at work day and night, with the result that mighty though the army was, the warriors were provided with harness and shirts of mail. There was a spare horse for every two men, a tent for every ten, and each complement of ten had two spades, a pickaxe, a sickle, a saw, a hatchet, an awl, a hundred needles, thread, casting-nets, and a big iron saucepan. Tamerlane had his studs assembled and the horses distributed. The treasuries were opened, and pay was allotted in gold and silver. "The soldier may die," he said to his generals, "but he must have received his pay." Tamerlane's army was not like that of Jenghiz Khan, a national army in which everyone had to serve

without pay from youth until old age; it was a mercenary army. Each warrior received the value of one horse; as soon as he distinguished himself, he received double or four times the amount. The leader of ten was given ten times as much as a private soldier; the leader of a century was given double that amount; and the commander of a thousand three times as much as the leader of a century. The salary of the ministers of States and of generals of division corresponded to the value of from 1,000 to 10,000 horses.

The armies assembled in the north of Transoxania, on the hither side of the Syr-Darya, over which the engineers built pontoon bridges. Tamerlane had, in the previous spring, sent peasants across the stream to plant the land, so that now, when he marched late in autumn, Tashkent, which was to be the winter-quarters, would be adequately supplied with grain and fodder. Just as Jenghiz Khan's successors, before their great warlike undertakings, had made pilgrimage to the tomb of Jenghiz to invoke his blessing, so Tamerlane, being a Moham-medan, now made pilgrimage to the tomb of a Mohammedan saint, distributed a large sum in alms, and begged the favour of Heaven before going to his headquarters at Tashkent. He wanted to start at the beginning of winter, for before him lay the terrible desert, the notorious "Hunger-steppe"—Bek Pakdala—and he hoped that by the ensuing spring he would be leading his army once more through fertile regions. But at this juncture he fell sick, and fever confined him to his bed for forty days.

"The whole universe trembled at the thought of losing him, and tongues refused to utter the word 'mourning'."—Thus the chronicler.

By January he had recovered, and in a formal manifesto Tamerlane declared war against Juji's fief, had the imperial standard unfurled, and ordered the whole army to set forth. One of his wives, Chulpan-Melik (Morning Star), the daughter of a Jagatai Khan and therefore a Jenghizide, had the honour of accompanying him on this campaign.

But the right moment for the advance had been missed.

Rain and snow detained the army for weeks in the flats beside the lower reaches of the Syr-Darya. Toktamish must have heard of the threatening invasion, for envoys from him arrived at Tamerlane's camp. They brought presents, splendid race-horses, and a falcon whose hood and jesses were trimmed with jewels.

Tamerlane perched the falcon on his wrist, and gave his whole attention to the bird without paying any more heed to the envoys who, on their knees, were announcing their master's regret and voicing his apologies. At length he vouchsafed them an answer which the chroniclers reproduced verbatim. It shows that Tamerlane, now five-and-fifty years of age, had already assumed the airs of an Asiatic despot, recognising no power on earth higher than his own, and arrogating to himself the position of judge even of a Khan of Jenghiz' race.

This is what he told the envoys to say to Toktamish:

"The whole universe was informed about the benefits we heaped on Toktamish. He came, sorely wounded, to our court, which has always been a place of refuge for the unfortunate, to seek asylum and implore our protection. We helped him, providing him with troops, sparing neither men nor money in order to re-establish him on the throne. We did not shrink from any losses until we had made him master of the wide domains of Juji's fief. Thenceforward, too, we treated him as a son, but he repaid us with ingratitude, for his presumption and his arrogance, his vast treasures and his formidable army, soon made him forget all that he owed to us in the way of gratitude. He went so far as to seize a moment when we were far away engaged in war, to take up arms against us and to lay waste the frontier regions of our realm. Nevertheless we were considerate enough to ascribe the wrong he did us to the outcome of evil counsels given him by his courtiers, hoping that he would blush because his conduct had been so censurable and would humbly come to us in order to beg pardon. But the vapours of vanity and presumption had mounted to his head, so that he marched in person against his benefactor. He actually invaded our State, spreading desolation, and plundering far and

wide, and this punishable behaviour compelled us to leave distant regions that we might hasten to the aid of our faithful subjects, and drive away the ungrateful wretch to whom the most sacred rights had become a sport. He did not hesitate, as soon as we approached, to undertake a shameful flight; and to-day, having learned our intention to fight him in person, he once more endeavours to lay the storm that has gathered over his head, having recourse to humility, and thinking to win us over with soft promises. But since he was several times proved perjured and disloyal, we shall no longer be rash enough to believe his fine words, and we shall, inflexibly, continue to carry out the plan which we formed when we left it to the God of battles to decide between him and us."

Courtly etiquette made it necessary for Tamerlane to provide a feast in honour of the envoys. He gave them suitable quarters, and bestowed upon them costly apparel, but he gave orders that they were to be closely watched lest they should escape.

IV

On February 21st, he summoned a kuriltai, at which it was decided to resume the advance.

When compared with Jenghiz Khan's sedulously elaborated campaigns, guided by a very careful study of the adversary and his country, this raid of Tamerlane's was a foolhardy adventure, involving greater risks than those perhaps ever faced by another commander. He was leading 100,000 men into the unknown, his only certain information being that somewhere in this unknown was his foe Toktamish, whom he was determined to seek out and to destroy. But these 100,000 had blind trust in their idolised leader Tamerlane, and Tamerlane, the gambler, the only one among them who knew how hazardous was the campaign, trusted no less blindly in his own luck.

Setting forth, the army rode for three weeks across the steppes, and for three weeks more across the notorious desert

of Bek Pakdala. By the time they reached a river, after one-and-a-half months, the horses were utterly exhausted. But they were only allowed to rest so long as was requisite to transport the army across the river, and then they continued their course through the steppes. Mountains blocked the way, but over these they climbed. Tamerlane halted his army while he ascended one of the highest peaks. Beneath stretched the steppes, an endless emerald-green carpet, a view to rejoice the heart of every nomad. Tamerlane spent the whole day upon this summit of Ulukh-tak. Then he ordered his men to bring up stones and build a monument there, on which the stonemasons cut the date to preserve the memory for all time. The column stands to-day in the middle of the Kirghiz Steppe.

On they marched, farther and farther, for an undefined goal. Endless was the country, untilled, uninhabited. They had been riding now for three months, without knowing whither, and without meeting a soul, with no idea where Toktamish and his army might be. Food became so scarce that Tamerlane commanded his generals and lesser officers, on pain of death, to see to it that no one in the whole army should bake bread for himself. All the food was redistributed, the generals and the princes getting precisely the same rations as the private soldiers and the servants, no one being allowed to eat anything more than a thin gruel. The soldiers ranged the steppes in search of the eggs of waterbirds, four-footed denizens, edible plants—and he who had the luck to find something worth eating had to save up his ration of gruel for next day.

At length Tamerlane allowed a combined hunt. In accordance with the Mongolian custom a large area of land was encircled, and all the livestock it contained was driven into the centre and slain—antelopes, wild asses, stags, steppe-birds. For the first time Tamerlane's warriors saw elks, and the flesh of these provisioned the army for a few days. Spirits rose, and the men continued their march.

When he reached the sources of the river Tobol, Tamerlane thought it expedient to hold a big review in the hope of en-

couraging his men. The army was drawn up in battle-array, with right wing, left wing, centre, and advance-guard. The chronicler waxes enthusiastic over the spectacle:

"It was an innumerable army of warriors, used to victory and to triumphing over their enemies. They rushed into the battlefield like elephants intoxicated with wrath; they were armed with spears, swords, and daggers, a mace, and a casting-net. They sheltered themselves with shields covered with crocodile skin, and their horses were protected by harness made of tiger hides.

"The sovereign mounted his foaming charger to descend into the plain, his head decked with a golden crown set with rubies, in his hand a club shaped like the head of an ox. At his approach, the princes, the emirs, the generals who commanded the various corps, dismounted from their horses and fell on their knees before their ruler."

Having examined the equipment, the weapons, and the war-provisions of the detachments, he made enheartening speeches. The review lasted for two days, "from early morning, when the sun, the radiant charger of the sky, rose, until evening, when the ruler of the heavenly spheres himself holds a review of the legions of the planets and the stars."

When Tamerlane came to the last detachment, which was commanded by his grandson Muhammed-Sultan, the young prince kneeled before his grandfather and begged for the command of the advance-guard. Muhammed-Sultan was the eldest son of the deceased Jehangir, who had been the conqueror's favourite, and Tamerlane had transferred his ardent affection to this grandson, intending him to inherit the throne. Nevertheless he gave him this command, although now, when any day an ambush might be encountered, or an invisible enemy might turn up with a superior force, it was a very dangerous position.

The army marched northward down the Tobol, still without knowing its destination; and without discovering a trace of the enemy. At length, after another week, Muhammed-Sultan

reported having seen a fire on the farther side of the river. The army crossed the Tobol, to find the ashes of recently extinguished fires, but no one there who might have kindled them.

Tamerlane sent a Turcoman bahadur who had spent his whole life in the steppes to reconnoitre with a force of several men. After a few days this scouting party discovered some forsaken huts in a wood, and ultimately seized a captive. The Turcoman leader brought the man to Tamerlane and the prisoner declared that he had been living here alone for months, hunting; but a few days before ten strange horsemen had appeared in the region and hid in a neighbouring copse. Hereupon the troops surrounded the copse and took the horsemen prisoner; they were some of Toktamish's warriors. At length something definite could be learned about the enemy. He was far away to the west, beside the river Ural.

A change was made in the line of march. Now they moved westward, but still, as before, without meeting anybody. They reached the Ural. The river had three fords, but Tamerlane ordered his men to keep away from all. The whole army must swim the river at the spot where they had struck it. This was Tamerlane's salvation, for Toktamish had posted ambushes beside the fords. Now they marched down the river.

More than three months had passed since leaving the Syr-Darya, and on they went, still without finding a trace of Toktamish. At length, when they were on the banks of the Samara, the advance-guard, which was feeling its way with extreme caution, heard the noise of the hostile army. Immediately Tamerlane's whole force was halted.

He assembled his officers and chieftains, distributed presents, rich apparel, costly weapons, money. He overwhelmed them with tokens of good will. Though he himself never missed a chance of fomenting treachery in the ranks of the enemy, he guarded himself against this eventuality by doing all he could to win the gratitude and promote the dependence of his adherents before the decisive hour. Thenceforward no one was allowed to straggle from the body to which he was attached.

Each camp, at night, was surrounded by a trench and watched by sentinels.

Thus secured against surprise-attack and against desertions, the army advanced day after day in order of battle, but continued to march into vacancy. In this fourth month of the campaign, the soldiers were weary, the horses were exhausted, and supplies were at a very low ebb. The continued evasion of the enemy made Tamerlane's army nervous. They had now reached a latitude where it seemed to them that in June "the dawn showed in the sky before the light of evening had completely faded," and the mullahs declared that the soldiers did not need to say evening prayers. They had passed right through the steppe country and were in forest regions; the soil was boggy. How much farther were they to go?

A prisoner brought before Tamerlane declared that Toktamish, being aware that Tamerlane's army was weary and short of food, was trying to lure his adversary deeper into the marshland. Tamerlane had the prisoner put to death, lest he should spread this news among the monarch's soldiers—and commanded a speedier advance. Troops were sent ahead, with orders at all costs to get into touch with Toktamish.

They encountered a small detachment, attacked it, and returned with forty prisoners to Tamerlane; but these men did not know where Toktamish's main army was. They had arrived too late at a spot where a junction had been arranged, had failed to find Toktamish, and had then lost their way while in search of him. Tamerlane had them killed, and his army moved on into the unknown, across morasses, little lakes, and rivers.

At the crossing of a river, the advance-guard suddenly encountered a strong enemy detachment, and was cut to pieces by it. Tamerlane, hastening to the spot at the head of his guards, was at any rate able to ascertain that the assailants were part of Toktamish's rear-guard. He commanded his son Omar-Sheik to pursue them with 20,000 men and to force Toktamish to join battle.

Next day, Omar-Sheik overtook Toktamish's main body;

the day after that Tamerlane arrived. Now the two armies faced one another. Then suddenly, in mid-June, a snowstorm began, and raged for six days. On the seventh, the skies cleared, and Tamerlane made ready for a decisive battle.

His troops were hungry and over-tired; the enemy was fresh, numerically superior, and was fighting in its own country, with which it was familiar. But Tamerlane had no alternative. He needed the enemy cattle to feed his soldiers, and victory was essential to him to sustain their confidence. Had he now retired, after a pursuit which had lasted four months, Toktamish would have cut his discouraged army to pieces during its retreat. He must fight to a finish then and there.

"The two armies, whose soldiers were more numerous than the grains of sand in the desert, clashed against one another to shed torrents of blood, simultaneously brandishing their swords and waving their banners. The brave combatants on both sides drew vengeful sabres, made ready their maces and their javelins, delivering their hearts over to death and battle. The earth became a cloud of dust, and was transformed into a raging sea whose threatening waves washed hither and thither. The sun, the source of light, was darkened by the dust thrown up by the furious riders, and the countenance of the moon was soiled by the dust. The heavenly sphere emitted a long-drawn groan, and the world plaintively petitioned for grace." Such is the chronicler's introduction to a report of the battle.

It lasted three days. That he might have greater reserves at his disposal, Tamerlane had chosen a new order of battle, leading his forces by degrees to the fray in seven detachments instead of five. Toktamish disposed his army in a demi-lune of three great divisions, hoping thus to take advantage of his superior strength. Tamerlane was well aware that the loss of this battle, when he was deeply engaged in hostile territory, would mean complete annihilation; and his sons and his bahadurs were equally convinced of this. They fought, therefore, with the courage of despair, but, despite their valiancy, he was several times close to defeat, managing to avert it again and again by personal inter-

vention at the head of his guards. The three princes of Juji's race who were in Tamerlane's camp were able, during the battle, to discover their own tribes and to detach them to the side of Tamerlane; but this did not hinder Toktamish, on the third day, from crumpling up Tamerlane's left wing, so that he was able to attack the invader's army in the rear.

At this moment, when all seemed lost, Tamerlane commanded his soldiers of the centre to dismount and pitch their tents, as if they intended to camp on the battlefield. At this very instant Toktamish's imperial standard fell, for Tamerlane had utilised the six days of the snowstorm to bribe Toktamish's standard-bearer. On receiving a pre-arranged signal he was to lower the imperial standard, and this customarily denoted the death of the Khan.

Toktamish, feeling certain of victory when he attacked the enemy in the rear, had now, cut off from his main body, to watch helplessly how his men ceased attacking, crumbled away, and took to flight—for why should a soldier go on fighting when his Khan is dead? In the end, he too, to escape being taken prisoner, had to flee.

Tamerlane's warriors pursued the enemy to the Volga. It is said that more than 100,000 corpses bestrewed the plain; and all the wives, the children, the treasures, and the herds fell into the hands of the victors. The booty was incredibly large. At one blow Tamerlane's army was compensated for all its hardships, its dangers, and its pains. The men had an excess of women, slaves, and wealth—and, above all, they had plenty to eat. In the middle of hostile territory beside the distant Volga, there began a wild and strange festival, banquets at which the meats were served on jewelled platters and the drinks in golden goblets. It lasted without intermission for twenty-six days.

CHAPTER XXX

THE FIVE YEARS' CAMPAIGN

I

THE rumour of Tamerlane's campaigns made all Asia quake. In the west he had advanced to the mountains bordering the Black Sea. He had led his troops southward to the flats beside the Indus. He had gone so far north that he had reached the place where one day passed into another without intervening night. But, after returning from the Volga, having fallen very sick and finding it necessary to appoint his sons as regents over the various parts of his empire, he recognised that it still consisted only of Transoxania and the adjoining lands of Khorassan, Herat, and Afghanistan. No more.

With fire and sword he had laid the uttermost west in ruins, storming fortresses, conquering strongholds. But hardly had he turned his back upon his conquests, than the Georgian, Turcoman, Armenian, and Kurdish principalities were re-established; and whoever, before, had been vassals of Sultan Ahmed again recognised that potentate's supremacy, as if Tamerlane had never been.

He had terrorised the princes of Southern Persia. By building pyramids of human skulls he had made them subject to him so that they swore fealty; but hardly had he departed when Shah Mansur emerged from the savage defiles of Khuzistan; while all the local princes, forgetting their oath of allegiance, joined forces with the Shah. Not one of the subjugated territories had been effectively incorporated into Tamerlane's Empire.

Now, during this last campaign against Toktamish, the most brilliant of his military achievements, he had, after superhuman exertions, defeated his great enemy by a stratagem. But what

had this victory brought him beyond casual spoils? Once more he had failed to achieve a conquest, he had failed to force the realm for which he had been fighting to accept his dominion.

Though Toktamish had fled before him, Toktamish was still Khan of Juji's fief, and somewhere or other in the vast spaces under the sway of the Golden Horde he was assembling new forces. Tamerlane had wanted to re-establish the empire of Jenghiz Khan, and had hardly succeeded in getting a firm grip of the realm of Jagatai. He was already fifty-six years of age.

Perhaps the fruitlessness of a life full of wars and battles, despite an unbroken succession of victories, would have made another man weary and resigned, but Tamerlane knew nothing of renouncement. He did not abandon a jot or tittle of his overwhelming schemes. The repose forced on him by illness was no more than a warning how much there still remained for him to do; advancing years were a spur to convince him that he must lose no time. If everything he had hitherto achieved was still too little, then, in the future, he would be more thorough-going in his conquests, so that the countries he had once seized should have no inclination to rebel against him.

Six months after his return from the Volga he mobilised his army once more, and again he himself took supreme command. He had able generals, he had valiant sons who had proved their mettle a dozen times; but he would not assign either to one or to the other more than a strictly circumscribed task. He had not, like Jenghiz Khan, created a completely new art of war; had not, like his model, founded a school for generals. Such comprehensive strategic plans, such blows as irrevocably shattered a realm, Asia was not to know again. Tamerlane was under no illusion, was aware that his army and his generals were neither better nor worse than those of his adversaries; and he was sure that nothing but his personal presence, his sudden resolutions, and his will, had brought him victory. Nor did he underrate the foe, not even now when it was his first business

to re-establish his conquests in the previously subjugated Southern Persia.

His 80,000 men traversed the country in three armies. One of them thrust itself in between Fars and Khuzistan to prevent Shah Mansur from withdrawing into his mountain fastnesses; the second was to break the resistance of the hill-strongholds; the third, led by Tamerlane himself, attacked Shiraz, Shah Mansur's capital. Once more it appeared that Tamerlane formed a right estimate of his foe. Shah Mansur was incredibly courageous, his assaults were irresistible, and even when his army had been beaten and all seemed lost, he did not flee, but, collecting those who were loyal to him, broke through Tamerlane's lines, made for the world-conqueror and boldly attacked him. He knew that this meant his own death, that he would never be able to escape the avenger's sword; but his hope was to drag with him to death this formidable enemy who had been devastating Western Asia for twenty years. Twice his sword clashed down on Tamerlane's head, but twice the steel helmet averted death, and the blade glanced off the iron armour without having found a penetrable spot. The third stroke was averted by Tamerlane's bodyguards, who intervened. One after another, Mansur's doughty adherents were cut down, and at length the Shah's own head rolled at Tamerlane's feet.

After the death of the Shah, the local princes once more appeared to pay homage to Tamerlane, but this time he knew no mercy, and had them all put to death. Southern Persia no longer was ruled by a dynasty of its own, but was incorporated into Tamerlane's empire.

II

Next Tamerlane led his army into Mesopotamia, against Sultan Ahmed.

All Asia knew of Tamerlane's preference for learned and pious men, so the Sultan sent to him as envoy the most famous mufti and expounder of the Law in Western Asia, to lay Ahmed's

submission before the conqueror. Tamerlane received the envoy graciously, paid him the honours and bestowed the gifts that were proper for so leading a personality—but he did not vouchsafe a word in response to the offer of submission.

“Sultan Ahmed is a living morsel of flesh with two eyes,” reported Tamerlane’s spy to his ruler, thereby wishing to express his contempt of the Sultan. Tamerlane made straight for Bagdad, Ahmed’s capital. The army was too slow for him. He chose a few hundred picked men, and, with these, he made forced marches through breaks in the mountains. In the saddle by day, carried in a litter by torchlight after dark, he drove his men onward with the utmost speed to take Sultan Ahmed by surprise in Bagdad, venturing, with no more than these few hundred, to make his way into the enemy capital. He encountered no resistance. Ahmed, informed by pigeon-post of Tamerlane’s approach, fled with the utmost haste, and broke down the bridges across the Tigris behind him.

Tamerlane wished to pursue, but his Emirs restrained him, swearing to bring the Sultan in chains before his throne. They swam across the raging waters, and the pursuit lasted for two days and a night. Then only a few hours’ ride separated them from the fugitive. But these men were not of the calibre of the “bloodhounds of Jenghiz Khan”, Sabutai and Jebei, who relentlessly chased the Shah of Khwarizmia right across Western Asia. They lost their way in the Syrian Desert, nearly died of thirst, then chanced once more on the trail of the Sultan, seized his harem, his courtiers, and some of the crown-treasures. But Sultan Ahmed himself was already in Egypt, a country with which, as in the days of Hulagu, the decision of the fate of the new Mongolian storm seemed to depend—for Tamerlane, having laid Irak and Mesopotamia waste, was approaching the Syrian frontier. He did not cross the Euphrates here. It was too early to revive the old dispute of the Mongol Khans with the Mameluke Sultan on account of Syria, so long as he had foes at his back in the Kurdish and Armenian mountains.

Although the Sultan of Egypt had granted asylum to Tamer-

lane's enemy Ahmed, Tamerlane sent a friendly mission to explain that all the local principalities in Western Asia since the death of the last Ilkhan had been illegitimate, that their rulers had only been governors who had arrogated a royal title. Now since he, Tamerlane, had reduced them to obedience, it would be as well to arrange for a friendly exchange of ambassadors, and for free commercial relations between Egypt and Tamerlane's Empire. Then Tamerlane turned northward, to subjugate the last domains that were needed to round off the former realm of Hulagu.

A sea of blood was poured over the unlucky land between the Euphrates and the Caucasus. In this region there was no enemy important enough to need the attentions of a whole army, so Tamerlane divided his forces into little detachments which overran the whole area, plundering, murdering, and burning. "The Tartars," writes a Georgian chronicler, "tormented the populace in every possible way, by hunger, by the sword, by imprisonment, by intolerable martyrdoms, and most cruel treatment. They carried off masses of spoils and made numerous prisoners, in a way that none can venture to report, nor to describe the misery and gloom of our people. The once so flourishing province of Armenia was thus transformed into a desert where silence reigned. It is estimated that the number of those killed exceeded the number of those who were left alive." Nobody dared, any longer, to think of revolt or insubordination, and Tamerlane set his doughty son Miran-Shah on the re-established throne of the Ilkhans. Then, in the midst of the banquets, carouses, and festivities that were celebrating this great event, there arrived the unwelcome tidings that one of Toktamish's armies had come south through the Pass of Derbent and was ravaging the district of Shirvan eastward of the Caspian.

III

Overwhelming as Toktamish's defeat beside the Volga had been, it had not robbed him of any of his sources of strength.

Hardly had the remnant of his troops been got together than he sent them upon a plundering raid into Russian territory and summoned the feudatory princes to his camp.

The first who hastened to appear before the Khan, bringing him gifts, tribute, and bribes for the courtiers, was the Grand Prince of Moscow, Vasili, who was rewarded for his speedy compliance by the bestowal of new lands which had never belonged to Muscovy, including Nijni-Novgorod, Gorodets, and Murom—towns which had been under the sway of other princes, and which he now promptly occupied, partly with the aid of Mongolian warriors, and partly by corrupting the boyars. Thus did Muscovy grow at the expense of the other Russian territories, in return helping Toktamish to gather funds and restore his prestige. As recognised liege-lord of the Russians he soon regained authority over all the local Khanates, and began to think of taking vengeance on Tamerlane.

But once more his well-conceived plan failed. He did not succeed in luring Tamerlane into Shirvan for the defence of the road to Transoxania, which would have given him, Toktamish, a chance of destroying Tamerlane's army in Transcaucasia. Tamerlane was not fooled. He quietly waited till winter was over, crossed the Caucasus as soon as spring had come, and faced his adversary beside the Terek. This time Toktamish did not retreat as the enemy advanced, but himself took the offensive; and once more, a decision concerning world dominion was, for the great advantage of other peoples, decided by an internecine struggle among the Mongols. Never before had Tamerlane been so near defeat as on this occasion, although he had his whole army with him. Toktamish pierced Tamerlane's lines, and, like Shah Mansur before him, made straight for the conqueror. Tamerlane's lance was cut in twain, his sword was broken, and once more he only escaped with life through the devotion of his guardsmen who sacrificed themselves for their loved and admired ruler. His bahadurs, kneeling behind their shields, formed a living wall around him. Some fought their way to Toktamish's waggons, brought three of them back to

Tamerlane, and used them as a rampart, behind which they were able to repel all onslaughts, until Tamerlane's son Miran-Shah came to their help. In all parts of the battlefield, the struggle raged with like intensity. Princes and privates fought hand to hand, until at length Toktamish, despairing of victory, fled, and, by his flight, gave the sign for the break-up of his army. Tamerlane, thus unexpectedly finding himself victor, was so much moved that, in the middle of the battlefield he dismounted and flung himself on the ground to thank Allah for His mercies.

This time Tamerlane was resolved to give Toktamish no further possibility of reassembling his forces. The pursuit went from the Caucasus to the Volga, then up the Volga to the forests of Bolgary beside the Kama; and then, when Toktamish fled westward, back again to the Dnieper.

Beside the Dnieper other Mongolian hordes were encamped. Tamerlane attacked and dispersed them; beside the Don he found a third army and defeated it. Various Mongolian tribes fled before his warriors. One established itself eastward of the Caspian; another in Dobrudja; a third made for Asia Minor and settled down near Smyrna; a fourth went to Moldavia; a fifth found a home close to Adrianople; the sixth made for Lithuania. Everywhere we still find their offspring, and discover villages and districts bearing Tartar names.

Tamerlane allowed his son Miran-Shah to plunder Ukraine, himself marching northward against the Russian principalities, but the unpeopled steppes, the dense forests, the expanses of marshland, and the poverty of the much-ravaged cities disappointed the conqueror. When the winter began, he returned southward shortly before reaching Moscow, to find richer spoils in the Genoese colonies on the shores of the Sea of Azov, above all at Tana, the great port of transshipment, a storehouse for Egyptian, Persian, Italian, Spanish and Russian staples. The town was burned, the inhabitants were put to death or carried off as slaves. Then Tamerlane laid waste the territories northward of the Caucasus which had hitherto been spared; once more

marched round the Caspian and destroyed Astrakhan. Next he made for Sarai, the splendid metropolis of the realms of the Golden Horde.

Here were two cities not far from one another; Old Sarai and New Sarai. In the former place, reservoirs of water terraced at various levels unceasingly drove iron water-wheels. Here there were countless workshops; smithies, tile-works, potteries, smelting-furnaces. The other city was traversed by canals, adorned with lovely ponds; the houses had water-conduits, mosaic floors, walls with variously glazed tiles. In the ruins there have been discovered the vestiges of fine tailoring and shoemaking establishments, and of jewellers' shops. Under the remnants of other goods has been found coffee, which was drunk in this luxurious town during the fourteenth century. Tamerlane annihilated Old and New Sarai so thoroughly that nothing is left but ruins, one of them extending to fourteen square miles and the other to twenty, devoid of any trace of life—though for a century-and-a-half they were leading world-centres.

From these terrible blows the Golden Horde never recovered. It lost its importance as one of the kingdoms of the world, and ceased for ever to be a centre of Asiatic civilisation.

Its Mongols were still bold and warlike nomads. When the Grand Prince of Lithuania, Vitov, after Tamerlane's withdrawal, thought he had a fine chance of annexing the steppe of this region and with it the "Russian ulus", the Jenghizide whom Tamerlane had appointed as his vassal in this region joined battle beside the Vorskla, a tributary of the Dnieper. Vitov, urged on by Toktamish, had got together all the forces of Lithuania, and had as allies both Poles and Teutonic Knights. This was a splendid army, thoroughly equipped in accordance with the latest canons of the European art of war, and furnished with numerous pieces of artillery. But these new-fangled guns were of no use against Mongolian attack. Soundly beaten, Vitov fled, and his plans for incorporating Russia into the Polish-Lithuanian realm were buried for an indefinite time. Toktamish,

who had taken part in the battle of the Vorskla, retreated into the steppe, where he perished.

As late, almost, as a century after this, the Mongols were able to enforce the obedience of the feudatory princes, to plunder their territories, and to extend predatory campaigns as far as Lithuania, Poland, and Podolia. But, Sarai having been destroyed, the Golden Horde had no longer a centre for its empire, and lost importance more and more in comparison with the local Khanates of Sibir, Astrakhan, Khazan, and Crimea. The Golden Horde continued to decay.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE SEXAGENARIAN

I

LIEGE of the Golden Horde, ruler of the realm of the Ilkhans, and sovereign of Jagatai, Tamerlane, now sixty years of age, interrupted his career of blood for a while. It seemed as if he proposed to crown his work of destruction by a mighty edifice of reconstruction.

His realm had been definitively rounded off. In the conquered territories and provinces he had left the established administrative system in being; he had decreed that every town must have at least one mosque, one school, one cloister, one public bath, one caravanseraï, and one hospital; and in every place he maintained secret agents who were commissioned to inform the central government concerning all that went on in their district. Three thousand couriers were at work bringing their reports, and any misuse of governmental authority was ruthlessly punished—even as was false accusation.

Order and repose prevailed throughout his realm; the order and repose of a cemetery in the desolated and impoverished lands of Western Asia; prosperity and peace in Transoxania. Like one of the Fortunate Isles was this country, "the land between the rivers"—in very truth an island, for it was bounded on either side by the Syr-Darya and the Amu-Darya, which were crossed by no bridges. Ferry-boats alone provided for intercourse with the outer world. All could enter who pleased, but no one could depart without special official authorisation. Tamerlane had peopled Transoxania with princes, sages, and handicraftsmen gathered in from the outside world; and not one of these settlers was to escape him, nor must any spy in

the land be able to inform possible enemies about his preparations for war. When troops left the country, it was across pontoon bridges specially constructed for this purpose, to be taken to pieces as soon as the army had passed.

Tamerlane's conquests had completely altered the conditions of trans-Asiatic trade. Having destroyed Sarai beside the Volga, Urganj on the Amu-Darya, and Almalik in Semirychensk, he had blocked the great caravan routes from the Black Sea to China, opening instead a new route in the middle of which lay Transoxania. As under the Ilkhans the centre of gravity of the East had once before been transferred eastward, and Bagdad had been replaced by Tabriz, so, under Tamerlane there came a fresh displacement, and Samarkand was substituted for Tabriz. Samarkand was the most important depot of the continent at this period. From Hindustan came caravans heavily laden with spices and dyes; from China, silks, porcelain, gems, and musk; from the Golden Horde, costly furs. In the bazaar of Samarkand merchants of all nations rubbed shoulders, and goods from all parts of the world came into contact. Here they were packed in new bales, and continued their journey, not only to every country of Asia, but also to Europe. By way of Khwarizm, Nijni-Novgorod, and Moscow, they reached the Hansa traders; or by way of Herat, Tabriz, and Trebizond, they secured sea-transport in the vessels of the Genoese, the Venetians and the Pisans. Tamerlane did his utmost to promote commerce, offered premiums to ruined merchants, put down dishonesty and cheating by severe punitive measures, and wrote to all sovereign princes (Charles VI of France not excepted) urging them to send merchants—"since trade makes for prosperity."

His strong hand was extended no less over agriculture and industry than over commerce. The land was fertilised by artificial irrigation. Canals, bridges, orchards, and workshops abounded. He promoted sericulture, and transferred to Samarkand the ablest silk-spinners and silk-weavers of Persia and Syria. He commanded that cotton, hemp, and flax should be planted, and forced the most famous producers of cotton textiles to settle

in Samarkand. Ere long Transoxanian textiles, especially a splendid red velvet, were famous throughout the world. Potters from China, glass-blowers, armourers, and goldsmiths from Persia, Turkey, Georgia, and Syria, were forced to form colonies at Samarkand. Handicraftsmen began to play an important part in public life; they established guilds, participating in public ceremonies and festivities. Every privilege was extended to them, save one only—the right to return home.

While thus favouring commerce, agriculture, and industry, Tamerlane also did his utmost on behalf of art and science. The very man who had given over the towns of Iran to the destructive lust of his soldiery was an enthusiastic amateur of Iranian paintings and literature. He summoned the most notable scholars to his court, and commanded the chroniclers to keep a daily record of all important happenings. Every one of his warlike deeds, each of which denoted the destruction of some ancient centre of civilisation, was commemorated in Samarkand by a splendid monument. He plundered all the lands of Asia on which he set foot, and sent their art treasures to adorn his capital. He destroyed the most celebrated libraries, having the books carefully packed and transported on beasts of burden to Samarkand. In love with the splendours and luxuries of the old civilised races of the East, he destroyed them in their original seats, spreading poverty far and wide throughout Asia, to re-constitute them anew, more splendid, more magnificent, in his own capital. His buildings and monuments, constructed by the most famous architects of the epoch, were lovely artistic dreams, unique in their beauty.

He built with the same impetuosity as that with which he waged war. He was sudden, he was surprising, he was always seeking to outdo himself. Palaces sprouted from the earth with the swiftness of mushrooms. Having made his architects vie with one another in drafting plans, and having selected one of these plans, Tamerlane insisted that the construction must be effected in the shortest imaginable time. His Emirs had to watch the work, and if it was uncompleted by the appointed day their

lives and the life of the architect would be forfeit. The resulting architecture was stupendous and despotic; the walls were gigantic; the cupolas were mighty; all was titanic in its proportions, while remaining classically simple and lucid in its ground plan. But these translucently simple and forthright structures had a façade which showed an intoxicating play of colours, was richly ornamented, and displayed a confusing fancifulness of design. Here a union of the Chinese and the Persian styles produced a new Central Asiatic style which gives the impression that these formidable walls belonged to an epic in stone. The dome of a mosque rises to a height of 160 feet above the ground; an inner court is 300 feet long and more than 200 wide; a gate 45 feet high leads into a building—and all, the wall, the gate, the interior, and the exterior, are a symphony of glazed tiles, green, blue, white, yellow, pink. Circles, squares, stars, triangles, whorls unite to form an ensemble of symbols and arabesques that are completely harmonious, exquisite in their colouring. Hundreds of marble columns richly carved support turrets with gilded interiors. Turquoise-blue, purple, emerald-green, and amethyst mosaics, imperishable majolicas of incredible luminousness, blink and blaze in the sunlight beneath the eternally blue skies of Central Asia, so that the beholder has to close his dazzled eyes. Then, suddenly, he encounters a palace blinding in its whiteness, the only ornament being the nobility of its proportions. Nothing has come down to us save the ruins of some of these edifices, but all connoisseurs who have visited Samarkand are overwhelmed with enthusiasm for its glory.

What remains for us to see consists exclusively of mosques, mausoleums, and public buildings of various kinds. Of those edifices which Tamerlane had constructed for himself—his airy castles, his palaces which the chroniclers extolled as the most lovely ever constructed—nothing persists but their names, such as “Garden of Paradise”, “Garden that delights the Heart”, “Garden that represents the World”. It is not by chance that these architectural glories bore the name of “Gardens”. Nor is it by chance that numerous details in the ruins, such as the

longitudinally carved pillars, remind us of the tent-poles of nomadic days which were made of sweet-scented and curiously carved wood; that the ceramic embellishments resemble the embroideries with which the Mongols adorned the portières and hangings of their felted tents. Tamerlane built palaces, using them for the same purpose as his ancestors used tents. He wandered from castle to castle, without spending more than a night or two in any; and more important than all these buildings was, in his mind, the lay-out of the gardens in which he placed them, and where, at every visit, there would appear a tented town containing 50,000 such felt habitations. For how could a true Mongol hold festival in a "stone-built den", however splendid? No matter how glorious might be the colours of the walls and the domes, how could these compare with the ultramarine blue of the incredible vault of heaven which overarches the rich, lush green of the earth? Though the buildings constructed by his architects might be magnificent in the way in which they spanned space, the nomad of the steppes contemplated with far more pleasure the everlastingly shining arch of the Milky Way. No Mongol could enjoy a true festal mood in palaces or in cities, but only in the freedom of the open country, where everything around lived and breathed, full of movement and colour—for boundless as the nature of their homeland must be the cheerfulness of their festivals.

They went to a festival as if to a battle. The tables and the seats were in battle array, like the sections of their army, and each had his appointed place as when a battle was about to begin. They drank till they were all thoroughly drunken, and they ate until they could scarcely move, the man who could drink most and could eat most being a bahadur.

For everyone who attended the feast, it might prove his last battle, since Tamerlane was determined "to reward the good and punish the evil," so wherever games and pageants were going on, and shows were staged to amuse the populace, there the gallows also stood. Common folk were decapitated, the punishment of hanging being reserved for the distinguished;

and who could be sure that this death did not await him on the present occasion, inasmuch as everyone had enemies, and from moment to moment was in danger of being denounced for levying excessive taxes, hatching a conspiracy, abuse of power? There was no statute of limitations at this court. A man's evil deeds were recorded against him in perpetuity; and although Tamerlane might sometimes pardon, many a governor, many a general was arrested in the middle of a festival, tried, condemned by the evidence, and instantly executed. Many a merchant or craftsman who had come to the feast rich and respected, left the board a beggar because he had sold too dear. Thus did Tamerlane keep his subjects "betwixt fear and hope". Everyone had a deputy ready to step into his place, and no one could count on finding an advocate, for many who tried to buy off a friend, or at least to secure a milder sentence, paid for the attempt with his own life.

II

Amid these festivities and shows, Tamerlane announced a new campaign—to India.

For the first time this war seemed inexpedient to his chieftains and generals. They warned Tamerlane that the mountains on the way towered to heaven, that the forests were impenetrable, the deserts impassable, that the rivers of India were mighty, and the warriors countless and equipped with fighting elephants. They showed him the futility of attempting to conquer this over-populated land, that the sons and grandsons of the conqueror would, in the new environment, forget their descent, their manners and customs, and their speech.—All counter-argument was futile.

The semi-fabulous land of Hindustan, its riches and its gold, were a lure to Tamerlane. His insatiable ambition urged him forward against the country at whose bourne Jenghiz Khan had turned back. The conquerors who, like Alexander, had

led their soldiers into this wonderland of India, were, in Western Asia, surrounded by an incomparable nimbus, and their fame was imperishable. Tamerlane opened the Koran haphazard, that the Holy Book might decide whether he should go or stay, and encountered the sura: "Prophets, make war upon the heedless and the lawless."

"But the Emirs sat with bowed heads and said nothing, and their silence made my heart constrict," reports Tamerlane in his autobiography. "At first I was of a mind to cashier all those who were opposed to the conquest of India, and to entrust their armies and their regiments to their deputies." However, there were too many of them for Tamerlane to venture upon such a course, and the autobiography continues: "But since they had helped me in my rise to power, I could not resolve to destroy them. I reproached them, and although my heart was stern, as soon as they had accepted my plan all was forgotten."

One wing of the army, consisting of 30,000 riders, under the command of Tamerlane's grandson Pir-Muhammed, was sent southward from Kabul against Multan in the Punjab. The other wing, commanded by his second grandson Muhammed-Sultan was sent south-eastward along the foot of the Himalayas against Lahore, and the centre followed this left wing. Tamerlane himself, with a small picked force, made his way into the Hindu Kush, where no conqueror's foot had hitherto been set, and where lived the heathens of Kafiristan. Although it might be supposed that there were reasons for this India campaign in the wealth of the country, in the yearning to repeat the wonderful doings of Alexander (with whom Tamerlane liked to compare himself)—there was really no other ground for the foolhardy raid into the Hindu Kush than an old man's inordinate and crazy ambition. No treasure was to be gained from these poverty-stricken mountaineers, nor was there any realm to conquer. But why should there be left in Central Asia any people which did not bow the knee before Tamerlane? That was why he made his expedition into these savage and almost inaccessible highlands.

The indigenes fled to the tops of the mountains, and Tamerlane's bahadurs followed them. It was the season of the melting of the snows, and the horses slipped upon the ice. The men dismounted, waited for the night frost, and then tried the snowy declivities once more, keeping their horses warm by day under felt coverlets, and dragging the animals after them when night fell and the surface was frozen once more. Only a few of the horses held out for the ascent. When they at length reached the peaks, the natives had vanished, taking paths known only to themselves into out-of-the-way gorges. From these summits, the Mongols could discover no practicable way down. Then the Emirs and the common soldiers flung themselves broadspread on the snow, and slipped down the other side, sustaining one another during the descent by ropes. For Tamerlane they constructed a sort of toboggan fitted with rings through which ropes were passed, and this was lowered to a stage excavated with ice-axes, where he could stand for a while. By five such stages he was progressively slid down, until he reached a place where he was able to continue the descent unaided. Then they tried to lower Tamerlane's horses in slings made of their girths, but all except two vanished over the precipices and were dashed to pieces. Now the army continued its course on foot, with only their elderly leader mounted. After their struggle with the icy air of the heights, they had to fight hard against the strongholds of the hillmen, until amid incredible labours and hardships they at length reached the spot on the Indus where, two centuries before, Jelal-ed-Din, the last Shah of Khwarizmia, fleeing from Jenghiz Khan, had swum the river.

Tamerlane crossed the Indus on a pontoon bridge, and then began one of the cruellest and maddest campaigns (rich though the loot was) known to the history of Asia. Vainly did the Indians of the Punjab try to defend their towns and their possessions. The land was laid waste, stripped bare; men, women, and children were carried off as slaves. Those who were not killed or taken prisoner, fled into the interior of the country, and hard on the heels of the fugitives came the merciless invaders.

The fortified town of Bhatnair refused to surrender, and was stormed. In desperation the inhabitants set fire to their own houses, and flung themselves, with their wives and children, into the flames. Others killed their offspring to save them from slavery, and then hurled themselves on the foe, to die fighting. Ten thousand persons perished in the massacre. Next Tamerlane's men plundered the city "setting fire to what remained of the buildings, and destroying the walls so thoroughly that it seemed as if the place had never been inhabited."

Thereafter the avalanche of destruction moved on across the Indian plain against Delhi, the capital. The wealth of Hindustan was no fable. During the campaign so much precious loot and so many cattle had been seized, that the plunder became a burden, and the numerous slaves brought along were a danger to the invaders. Then, shortly before reaching Delhi, Tamerlane commanded that all who were bringing Indian slaves along must kill them, under pain of death if they disobeyed. Within an hour of the issue of this command, 100,000 of the Hindus were murdered. The chronicler reports the horror and repugnance which a gentle scholar, who would never have voluntarily slain even a sheep, felt when having fifteen Indian slaves strangled.

Outside the walls of Delhi the "Sultan of India", supported by his war-elephants, gave battle to the foe. He had machines which flung fire-pots and burning pitch, and discharged rockets tipped with iron which burst like shells when they struck the earth. But he could not withstand the onslaught of Tamerlane's warriors. He was defeated and had to flee. Then, without further resistance, this great city, incomparable for splendour and wealth, opened its gates to the conqueror.

Peacefully, therefore, Tamerlane entered Delhi and mounted the throne of the "Sultans of India". The governors and emirs came to pay homage to him, the war-elephants marched in solemn procession, salaamed before the ruler, and laid their heads upon the ground. Endless prayers were offered up on his behalf in the huge thousand-pillared mosque, the blessing

of Heaven being invoked on the new ruler. Tamerlane had a great festival of rejoicing organised, "so that all hearts were charmed, and the severities of the war and the labours of the campaign were forgotten."

Tamerlane's soldiers were already plundering the suburbs. He commanded his emirs to put an end to these disorders at once. But it was too late. Fifteen thousand troops had entered the inner city, and when an attempt was made to close the gates, those within re-opened them to admit their comrades who were without. The general feeling in the army was that it was preposterous to expect them after enduring unspeakable hardships in the rugged mountains of Afghanistan and Kafri-stan on the way to India to renounce the treasures of this most splendid of cities. In their fury, they mutinied against the officers who were trying to prevent looting. Discipline broke down completely, and the soldiery hurled themselves upon the unarmed inhabitants. "Never has any one heard of such murders and such despair." Even Tamerlane seems to have shrunk from being held accountable before the tribunal of history for what took place here, for he writes: "It was my earnest wish that the inhabitants of Delhi should be preserved from all evil, but Allah had decreed that the city should be laid waste."

These days put an end to the brilliant and widely celebrated capital of Moslem Hindustan. A century and a half were to elapse before a rebuilt Delhi could again become the seat of government. There were many private soldiers who, after this orgy of looting, each carried off from a hundred to a hundred and fifty slaves out of the town; while others were laden with more pearls, rubies, diamonds, golden and silver vessels, coins, than they could count. While many of the inhabitants were hewn down in the great mosque where they had taken refuge, others were led in chains outside the city; and, in proportion as they emerged, each emir chose a group for his own service. Since among them were many hundreds of handicraftsmen and artists, Tamerlane commanded that the stone-

masons and other builders should be reserved for his personal use. He had determined that as soon as he got back to Samarkand he would have a great mosque built modelled upon the thousand-pillared mosque of Delhi.

After the destruction of the capital, Tamerlane encountered no further organised resistance in Hindustan. He marched as far eastward as the other side of the Ganges, though this was no longer a war, being only a man-hunt. It was the aimless destruction of thousands and tens of thousands of Hindus—those who got in the way of Tamerlane's barbarous troops who were no longer guided by any aim of conquest, but merely advanced under stress of the predatory instincts of the soldiery.

When the army, exhausted by the increasing heat, at length faced about, making its way up the Ganges and then through the foothills of the Himalayas back to the Indus, its progress was that of a heavily encumbered folk-migration. Numberless were the slaves of both sexes, the laden waggons, the cattle. Many private soldiers were driving from 400 to 500 head of cattle each, as booty. This army, which had been renowned for its swiftness, could now advance no more than four miles a day.

Tamerlane appointed the Rajah of Multan, who had submitted and paid homage, viceroy over the devastated and depopled country. He had no thought of incorporating it into his empire, and in advance of the sluggish troops he hastened to Samarkand to celebrate his glorious campaign by beginning the construction of the mighty mosque of Bibi Hanum, in which all the faithful of his capital would be able to assemble at one and the same time for prayer.

III

Tamerlane personally superintended the building of the mosque. This necessitated the utmost haste and an extreme tension of forces for everyone concerned, from the leading architects to the least among the workmen. Ninety-five elephants

were continually at work conveying giant blocks of stone from the mountains to the chosen site, and on these blocks five hundred stone-masons used their chisels day by day. The magnificent structure grew out of the ground, 480 columns supporting the gigantic roof, while the wonderful floor consisted of cut and polished marble slabs, and the huge doors were cast out of an alloy of seven metals. But although Tamerlane took up his quarters close to the works, and although he called the princes and the emirs to his aid in superintending and hustling the operatives, he had not time to await the completion of the building, for Han-Sadeh, the lovely princess of Khwarizm, widow of his favourite son Jehangir, and now, in accordance with Mongolian custom, re-married to her brother-in-law Miran Shah, had come to lay a plaint against her husband before Tamerlane. When Tamerlane's eldest son Jehangir died, the Emir, then forty years of age, profoundly afflicted, had withdrawn from the people and the court to mourn his loss. He was approaching sixty when his second son, the valiant Omar Sheik, was fatally wounded by an arrow. On that occasion the world conqueror said to his emirs no more than: "Allah gave and Allah has taken away." Now the old man was prepared to order for instant execution his third son Miran Shah, the bold horseman and brave warrior who had twice saved the father's life, and whom the father had made Lord of Hulagu's fief.

Han-Sadeh accused him of having planned a rising, in order to make himself supreme ruler, but what truth there was in the story no one can tell. Miran Shah's behaviour was hardly of a kind to confirm the accusation, for he had taken no trouble to supervise the government of the lands already committed to his charge, spending his time in drunkenness, jousting, and other excesses.

"You must be sure to make your name immortal, and to be careful never to allow yourself to be depressed by what may happen," was the exhortation with which Tamerlane had appointed him Lord of Hulagu's fief; and it was Miran Shah's wish to be guided by his father's counsel.

When he arrived at Tabriz, he admired the splendour of the town. He asked questions about its history, about its rise as the residence of the Ilkhans, and then he said: "Truly I am the son of the greatest man in the world, but what can I undertake in these famous cities in order to keep my memory fresh in the mind of posterity?" He began to build.

But soon he came to realise that what he was building could not possibly rival what had already been built in the capital of the Ilkhans; and those who watched him saw how he roamed about his palace, obviously thinking: "Is there nothing I can do to preserve my memory?"

Suddenly he commanded: "Tear them down, the mosques, the palaces, the splendid public buildings—tear them all down!"

Then, in his drunken fits, he would babble: "In one way or in the other, men shall remember me. They will say: 'Verily, although Miran Shah could not build better than his predecessors, at any rate he was able to destroy the finest buildings in the world.'"

From Tabriz he went to Sultanieh, the fairy city of the last Ilkhans. There the work of destruction was continued while he caroused in the imperial palace. Then he was to be seen at the window of the palace flinging handfuls of gold pieces down to the crowd beneath.

Outside the town was a magnificent castle built by one of the Ilkhans, who was in due time buried in a magnificent mausoleum. Miran Shah had the body exhumed and thrown into the fields, while the mausoleum was destroyed. The treasures of gold which Tamerlane had stored up there, Miran Shah squandered in gifts to those who fawned on him.

The news of his crazy doings spread to neighbouring countries. Sultan Ahmed considered that the moment had arrived when, with the assistance of Egypt, he would be able to effect the reconquest of Bagdad. Hearing what was in the wind, Miran Shah flung himself into the saddle, and, famous as Tamerlane's swiftness had become, his son excelled it. He compelled his troops to ride two days' ride in one, wishing to reach the enemy

like a flash of lightning. The mere news of his coming was to arouse terror in the Sultan, and put the enemy to flight. But it was high summer, and the Sultan knew that the Syrian heat with the attendant drought would make investment of the town impossible, and, instead of fleeing, he prepared to resist to the uttermost. Since Miran Shah had denuded Persia of troops, revolts broke out everywhere, and two days after reaching the neighbourhood of Bagdad, the Prince had to return to Tabriz at top speed.

As soon as he was back, in his wrath he had all those he considered to be participators in the conspiracy executed with scant inquiry, among those put to death being a *cadi* and a *shereef* (a descendant of the Prophet). This put the Moslem priesthood against him, but he was past caring about such a trifle. The Turcomans had risen, the Georgians had expelled the governors of their cities, Bedouin Arabs from the Syrian deserts had invaded Persia—but our bold warrior and devil-may-care horseman cared little. He drank, dined, squandered the State treasures for the amusement of his boon-companions. What did such things matter? His father Tamerlane, “the greatest man in the world,” would soon put things to rights. He, Miran Shah, had done his best, had done everything in his power to be a good ruler, to beautify his realm, to defeat his enemies, to enrich his subjects—but all had gone awry. He could not even keep order in his own household, for there was incessant quarrelling between his two eldest sons, Abu-Bekr and Mohammed-Omar, on the one hand, and Prince Khalil, his son by Han-Sadeh, on the other. At length he himself mortally offended Han-Sadeh, whose ambition it was that her son should be regarded as the chief of the princes, for someone had inspired in him doubts as to her fidelity.

Tamerlane provided Han-Sadeh with a palace in Samarkand, not intending her to return to her husband; and he took her son Khalil with him back to Persia. When he reached Tabriz, Miran Shah appeared before him with a rope round his neck as greeting, and wished to be informed of his sentence. All

the emirs and all the officers found excuses for Miran Shah. They declared that the change in his behaviour and his follies and excesses had been the outcome of a fall from his horse which had disordered his reason. Did Tamerlane believe their asseverations, or did he rediscover in his son his own immoderate ambition which, being insatiable, was transformed into a will to destruction? However that may be, he did not inflict the death penalty, as he had at first intended. Summoning Abu-Bekr, Miran Shah's eldest son, he wanted to make the youth sovereign of Persia. But Abu-Bekr declared that, in the sight of God, he could not accept the position which belonged to his father, begged Tamerlane to forgive Miran Shah and reinstate him. Then Tamerlane appointed Khalil regent of the country.

As for Miran Shah's boon companions, they were sentenced to death, but one of them was a jester who, when about to mount the scaffold, suddenly drew aside, bowed to the dignitary who was next in turn to himself, and spoke the following words: "Pardon me, you have always claimed precedence." Tamerlane, who could invariably be placated by a witticism, granted life to the man who thus jested in the jaws of death.

CHAPTER XXXII

DREAM OF WORLD-DOMINION

I

JUST as two centuries before in Central Asia the realms of the greatest conquerors of the day, Jenghiz Khan and Shah Mohammed, confronted each other, and one dynast had to thrust the other off the earth, so now in Asia Minor, the frontiers of Tamerlane's empire and of the Osmanli empire of Bajazet were contiguous.

Here in Asia Minor had settled an insignificant Turkish tribe which had fled hither to escape the Mongol warriors. Now, after four generations under vigorous rulers with clear-cut aims, these Turks had created an empire which was becoming a terror to Europe.

Osman I, the founder of the Ottoman Empire, getting to work upon the Turkish chieftains who rallied to him from all sides, created a force of cavalry which, more disciplined and more fanatical than any of its neighbours, had destroyed the extant States of Asia Minor. His son Orkhan added to this cavalry force a remarkable body of infantry, the janissaries (literally, the "new soldiers"), mostly captured Christian youths who, educated as Moslem fanatics, could be formed into an elite troupe. It was these mercenaries, schooled for war, who, soon spreading through the Balkans, decided battle after battle in favour of their Turkish masters. Orkhan continued the victorious campaign of his father, crossed the Dardanelles, and took Gallipoli. His son Amurath conquered Adrianople, and with this as his headquarters began to wrest one stronghold after another from the Greeks, the Serbs,* the Bulgars, and the Albanians, carrying off the survivors of the garrisons as slaves

and putting Turks in their place. The senile Byzantium, whose emperor vainly sought help from the other countries of Europe and was surrounded on every side by the Osmanli, was compelled to buy peace by the payment of an annual tribute. The Byzantine ruler's example was followed by the kings of Bulgaria and Serbia, so that European Turkey now stretched from Salonika to the Danube. In the battle of Kosovo against the united Bulgarian and Serbian armies supported by Hungary, Poland, and Albania, the Turks were victorious. Amurath perished on the field, and his son Bajazet (having murdered his brother) succeeded to the throne. He made Serbia a Turkish dependency, and sent his troops on robber-campaigns into Croatia and Styria, while simultaneously threatening Byzantium and Hungary.

For the first time alarm at the Turkish peril spread throughout Europe. Everywhere the Cross was preached against the Turks. The chivalry of France, the South German princes and counts, and the Teutonic Knights hastened to Hungary, to help King Sigismund. At Nikopoli on the Danube the whole Christian army was cut to pieces, many of the men being taken prisoner, and most of the others slain by the Turkish light cavalry. Only a few were able to escape by the Danube, where they were taken aboard Venetian galleys. From this signal defeat dates European dread of the Turkish power. Bajazet Ilderim (Bajazet the Lightning) became the emblem of the dreadful, ever-victorious conqueror.

First he turned his attention to Asia Minor, where the princes threatened by Tamerlane's armies were glad to submit to him; and he extended his empire as far south-eastward as the Euphrates. Tamerlane was at this time in Hindustan.

When Tamerlane returned to Western Asia to restore order in Miran Shah's realm, Bajazet was back in Europe, preparing for a decisive thrust at Byzantium. It seemed as if nothing could save the ancient imperial city, whose fall was expected from day to day.

But at this juncture Tamerlane moved westward from Tabriz. At the first news of his approach, Sultan Ahmed of Bagdad and

his vassal Yussuf of Kurdistan fled in terror, and, since Egypt no longer seemed to offer safe harbourage, they sought it from the great conqueror Bajazet. Tamerlane demanded the surrender of his enemies, but received as answer: "Know, bloodthirsty hound named Tamerlane, that the Turks are not wont to refuse asylum to friends or to shun battle against foes." A mighty hostile coalition seemed imminent—an alliance of Mesopotamia, Syria, and Egypt, with the Osmanli Empire.

Tamerlane, who had just finished laying waste Georgia and Armenia in punishment for their rising against Miran Shah, did not hesitate. Sivas, the strongest border stronghold of the Osmanlis, was able to hold out for eighteen days, but a second fortress, Malatia, was taken by storm within twenty-four hours. Bajazet instantly raised the siege of Constantinople and hastened into Asia Minor.

But Tamerlane had no inclination to march against him so long as an intact Egypto-Syrian power could threaten his rear. As soon as he had safeguarded his right flank by taking the before-mentioned fortresses, he moved southward into Syria by forced marches. The enemy, by this time, had reached Aleppo. Their army was annihilated in open battle, then the town was taken and sacked.

This terrifying intelligence spread in advance of Tamerlane's southward movement. The Mameluke Emirs in Damascus began to wonder whether they would not do well to replace the youthful Sultan by one of themselves who might be better able to withstand so formidable a foe. As soon as the Sultan got wind of these intrigues, he thought it best to save himself by flight to Cairo. Thereupon Damascus opened its gates to the conqueror.

With trifling differences, the fate of Damascus was a repetition of the fate of Delhi. Filled with admiration, Tamerlane contemplated the venerable buildings of the city, had a sketch made of a mausoleum with an onion-shaped cupola, and gave orders that a similar one should be built in Samarkand. This became a model for many fine buildings in Central Asia, and more than

two centuries later was reproduced by Shah Jehan in constructing the famous Taj Mahal at Agra. As was his custom, Tamerlane sent every artist and skilled handicraftsman to Samarkand, and imposed an enormous war indemnity upon Damascus; but, for the rest, he wanted to spare the town. He actually made the mullahs sign a testimonial to him to the effect that he had shown clemency towards them because, being himself a Moslem, he did not wish to have them put to death despite the wrong they had done him. But once more his soldiers were unwilling to be deprived of the chance of looting so splendid a town; and scarcely had Tamerlane left Damascus (being forced to hasten northward in order to cope with Bajazet), than pillaging and murder began, with the result that the greater part of the town, including the celebrated Omayyad mosque, went up in flames.

Tamerlane, meanwhile, had got back to the Euphrates. He had finished the Syrian campaign in less than a year, passing like a hurricane across the land, leaving scarcely a city unravaged, razing all the fortresses to the ground—but still he had seen nothing of Bajazet. The Turkish Sultan must be assembling his forces somewhere in the west, so Tamerlane once more ventured upon an interlude in the way of campaigning, determined to break the resistance of Mesopotamia before his final clash with Bajazet.

Bagdad, the city of the caliphs, into which he had ridden five years earlier at the head of no more than a few hundred men, and which he had treated with so much clemency, now closed its gates against him. The inhabitants felt secure behind their mighty walls, considering the summer heat too great for siege operations, when the grass was withered and the wells had dried up. But Tamerlane, enraged by this defiance, summoned his siege-trains and all his appliances for taking a place by storm, and his warriors invested the town for forty days beneath the raging sun of the Tigris valley, when it was so hot that "birds fell dead out of the sky." One afternoon, when the defenders had retired into their houses to escape the pitiless blaze, leaving merely their helmets on staves showing over the parapets to

deceive the besiegers, Tamerlane's soldiers climbed the walls and forced a way into the town. The ancient palace of the Caliphs became the scene of a massacre whose extent can be judged by Tamerlane's command that on the ruins of the town 120 pyramids made of 90,000 human heads should be built. Not a house in the town was to be left standing—nor any building except mosques, schools, and hospitals.

Amid this blood-bath and amid this orgy of destruction, Tamerlane summoned the artists, the poets, and the scholars, and supplied them with horses on which they could reach other towns. Human life in general was valueless. Where there were no human beings, neither houses nor palaces were required. The only places that must not be touched were the houses of Allah. But art and science must be preserved; and the world conqueror loved fine verses.

II

Now there was nothing left to hinder a fight to a finish between the two conquerors. They belonged to the same race and professed the same religion. On either side the nomadic energies of Turan fought for victory in the name of Islam. Nor was there any adequate cause for hostility since the Turks' plans of conquest were directed towards the West, towards Europe; whereas Tamerlane, as successor of Jenghiz Khan, had no interest in Asia Minor. But Tamerlane regarded Bajazet as a man who had become unfaithful to his Turanian home. Having degenerated in the Byzantine and Arab environment, he must be fought in his own land, for he drew the sources of his strength from Europe. Bajazet, in his turn, looked upon Tamerlane as the leader of savage Turan, as a barbarian from the depths of Asia. The Turkish Sultan, in his own eyes, was defending the civilised West, and the teachings of history were ominous, for they showed that Turanians who had become acclimatised in the West invariably succumbed to a ferocious attack from the

East. Both the conquerors, therefore, were reluctant to join battle.

Several embassies were exchanged, and negotiations were opened; but the envoys were also spies seeking information. Tamerlane's prestige continued to grow. He received a mission from the Sultan of Egypt, bringing that potentate's submission. Genoese merchants and representatives who visited him could give him precise information regarding the extent of Bajazet's European territory. We are informed that the Byzantine Emperor sent Tamerlane an urgent appeal for help. Tamerlane was also doing his best to get into touch with Europe on the other side of Bajazet's dominions, exchanging embassies with Charles VI of France and Henry III of Castile. While thus engaged, both of them continued to assemble their armies and improve their equipment. Neither of them was inclined to yield a point, nor willing to pay much honour to the other, so the tone of the embassies became more and more acerb, and the phrasing of the letters that were interchanged more and more insulting. Tamerlane called Bajazet a Turcoman of dubious birth; and the chroniclers have thought it expedient to keep to themselves the tenor of Bajazet's reply. Tamerlane was at Sivas, Bajazet at Angora, and neither could withdraw, for withdrawal would have signified weakness.

At length Tamerlane opened hostilities by taking a frontier fortress. Bajazet, whose army consisted mainly of infantry with the invincible janissaries as their nucleus, thereupon advanced from Angora along the only great military road, moving slowly to meet Tamerlane. About half-way between the two strongholds, on hilly and well-wooded ground which seemed likely to be most unfavourable to Tamerlane's cavalry, the Turkish Sultan halted to await his adversary.

But Tamerlane did not appear. Bajazet dispatched scouting parties in all directions. Some of them made their way to Sivas. Tamerlane was not there. He had long since abandoned the city, but no tidings of him could be gleaned between Sivas and Bajazet's camp.

Now messengers came from Angora. Tamerlane was close to that town. From Sivas he had made a detour to the south. Then, without touching any towns, and always keeping the river between him and Bajazet, he had moved westward by roundabout ways, and was soon, with his whole army, cavalry, infantry, war-elephants, and siege-trains, in Bajazet's own hinterland.

Bajazet could not afford to allow his country to be devastated, and to be cut off from every source of help. He therefore made forced marches back towards Angora. Tamerlane attempted to take Angora by storm, and before he had got possession even of the outer walls, he was told that Bajazet's army was approaching. He raised the siege, moved into Bajazet's abandoned camp, had the only river which flowed close to it diverted so that the water would be inaccessible to the enemy, being behind his own camp, and he filled up all the wells. When, after several days' forced marches in the July heat the Turks reached the plateau of Angora, they found the enemy in their own camp, could get no water for themselves or their horses, and had to give battle when they were tired out and suffering from intolerable thirst. For them the day was lost before it had begun.

The Turkish army was one of the finest in the world, its men being capable of performing miracles of valour. The battle, which began at six in the morning, lasted till nightfall, but all the Turks' efforts were fruitless. Vainly did 20,000 Serbian warriors in full harness with their king at their head sacrifice themselves; vainly did the janissaries allow themselves to be cut down where they stood. When the Turcoman soldiers from Asia Minor who had been pressed into Bajazet's army recognised their fugitive sovereign in Tamerlane's train and deserted to join him in mid-battle, the Turks' position was hopeless. The western Turanian realm was overthrown by the Turanians of Central Asia. Bajazet, unwilling to acknowledge defeat, continued to fight amid his janissaries, and decided too late on an attempted escape. He was taken prisoner and brought before Tamerlane.

Tamerlane received his adversary with the customary honours, made him sit down, surrounded him with rich apparel, and supplied him with a tent near his own. But the elderly warrior (he was fifty-six) could not long endure the shame of defeat, and died soon afterwards, having survived only to watch the devastation and subjugation of Asia Minor as far as the coast, and the humiliating acceptance of Tamerlane's suzerainty by his son Suleiman, who had taken refuge in European Turkey.

This defeat of the Turks by Tamerlane was the saving of Constantinople. The Byzantine Empire, though in a condition of senile decay, was given a respite of fifty years. The victory of Angora was celebrated by the Byzantines as if it had been their own. The Emperor sent gifts to Tamerlane, and recognised his supremacy. Tamerlane's renown as the saviour of Christendom spread throughout Europe.

III

For the nineteenth time Tamerlane returned in triumph to his beloved Samarkand. In his long life he had subjugated twenty-seven Asiatic realms, was absolute monarch of the whole Moslem world, but still his iron nature could know nothing of repose. We have a perfectly reliable account of Tamerlane and his empire from the pen of the Spanish ambassador Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo who, at this date, was sent to Tamerlane by Henry III of Castile. Clavijo had to traverse the whole extent of Western Asia to reach Tamerlane at Samarkand. He was astonished, not only by the vast extent of the empire, the incredible beauty of the ruler's palaces and gardens, but also by the amazing vital energy of the old man who, though already near to blindness (so that the ambassador had to be brought quite close before Tamerlane could see his face), and no longer able either to ride or to walk, still held all the threads of empire in his own hands.

He continued to build at lightning speed. Not being pleased

with the mausoleum which had been constructed for Muhammed Sultan, the favourite grandson who had fallen in Asia Minor, he ordered that it should be torn down, and a new one erected within ten days. Daily he had himself carried in a litter to watch the building operations, and spurred on the workmen so vigorously that it was actually completed in the stipulated time. He moved from garden to garden, from palace to palace, so that the envoys never saw him twice in the same place. Not only did he give riotous festivals, at which the guests were expected to get drunk, but himself actively took part in them, drinking freely with the others. Though very ill, and convinced that his death was approaching, he got together the greatest army that he had ever led, comprising more than 200,000 men, and marched eastward to make war against China.

With one exception, all the Western Asiatic chroniclers preserve complete silence about the relations of Tamerlane's empire to China, hoping that posterity would never learn their sovereign's attitude towards the "Son of Heaven". But the exception confirms the unanimous reports of Chinese historians that Tamerlane, "Lord of the World", acknowledged himself to be a vassal of the Middle Kingdom.

China, which had been strengthened and rejuvenated as the outcome of the nationalist revolution against the Mongol emperors, now claimed supremacy over all the Mongol fiefs which Kublai, the Khakan, had ruled. Inasmuch as Tamerlane claimed to be legitimate successor to Jagatai's fief, and kept a tame Jenghizide as Khan, ruling in the latter's name, the Ming Emperors of China, regarding themselves as the legitimate heirs of the Yuen Dynasty, sent a demand that Tamerlane should pay them homage. Tamerlane, being then fully engaged by his struggle in Iran, did not venture to rebel against the all-powerful Middle Kingdom. He dispatched embassies to the court of the Emperor of China bearing reports of his deeds and conquests, even as Hulagu's successors had sent reports to Kublai. We read of three embassies bearing tribute, and of a counter-embassy in which Tamerlane was recognised as a vassal, and

"informed of the Emperor's commands". The Persian chronicler, apparently unaware of this last detail, merely mentions that Tamerlane received a Chinese embassy, but proceeds to mention that his sovereign, who was then setting out to make war against Shah Mansur, unfurled a new standard, upon which a dragon was embroidered.

This state of vassalage must have been intolerable to Tamerlane's pride; and it must certainly have been one of the most enjoyable days of his life when he could permit himself the liberty of giving the ambassador of the King of Castile precedence over the envoy of the Emperor of China; for, as Clavijo reports, Tamerlane made a point of sending one of his dignitaries to the Chinese envoy to inform the latter, that, by Tamerlane's express orders, the Chinese envoy must take a lower seat, having been commissioned by a robber and an enemy.

There can be little doubt that it was the dread that death would overtake him before he could reach the farthest goal of his ambition which induced Tamerlane to assemble his army in the middle of a severe winter, and, ailing though he was, to depart from Samarkand upon his greatest (and, as he must have realised, most arduous) campaign against the mightiest empire in the world. There was so severe a frost that men and horses perished on the way, while the soldiers suffered from frostbite in hands and feet. Nevertheless Tamerlane ordered that the standard should be unfurled, and the eastward march begun. He himself crossed the Syr-Darya on the ice to reach Otrar; but at this juncture "neither his empire nor his army were of any more use to him, neither his wealth nor his treasures, neither his crown nor his throne."

Though suffering from fever, unable to stir from his bed, racked by pain, he insisted on being kept informed about the condition of the army, the placing of the various detachments, and the possibility of a continued advance. Only when he learned that there was no hope of his survival, did his mood change. Sending for his wives and his emirs, he begged them: "Do not make a lament or raise a clamour about my death, for such things

do no good; never yet has death been frightened away by screaming. Instead of rending your garments and running hither and thither like lunatics, pray God to be gracious to me; say prayers that will delight my soul." Then he appointed Pir-Muhammed, the son of his eldest son Jehangir, as his successor to the throne, made the emirs swear to be guided by these last dispositions, to obey Pir-Muhammed and serve him faithfully, and exhorted them to unity. The emirs wanted to send for his other grandsons, who were in command of various sections of the army, that they might receive his last orders from his own mouth, but Tamerlane knew that it was too late. "I have only one desire left, to see my son Shah Rokh, again," he said; "but that is impossible, Allah has not willed it, so I must wait for the day of the Last Judgment before my wish can be fulfilled."

Next night, on February 18, 1405, when a violent storm was raging, amid flashes of lightning and peals of thunder, while the imams and sayids unceasingly read the prescribed prayers, the Ruler of the World passed away in the seventieth year of his age.

IV

Seldom has any sovereign been so much hated and cursed, so much loved and admired, as was Tamerlane. There is hardly any other figure in history so full of contradictions and inconsistencies as was his. Certainly no one else has annihilated so many, destroyed so much, and all the same his life and his character have remained as an example to rulers for many generations. No other Asiatic despot made so profound an impression upon Europe. For centuries European monarchs and Russian tsars admired his deeds; and the tribes throughout Asia, as far as the remotest parts of Siberia, continue to sing songs about him, while the hunters of the Pamirs point with pride to the irrigating channels cut through the rock by orders of Tamerlane the Great. During the most destructive of his campaigns, his soldiers continued to cut canals, divert rivers, and build dams.

Living at the end of an epoch, he tried once again, assembling all its energies, to restore its greatest sheen—but, by his work, destroyed it for ever.

He wished to bring about the rebirth of the empire of Jenghiz Khan, but he lacked Jenghiz Khan's sustaining political idea, which was to effect a union of the nomadic tribes and establish their dominion over the civilised peoples. It was impossible that Tamerlane should entertain this idea for, being a nomad only by blood, his spirit was rooted in civilisation. Jenghiz Khan created a nation, and built his realm out of the very being of this nation, and for the nation whose highest embodiment he himself was. Tamerlane effected his conquests with an army of mercenaries, which uplifted him, the luckiest and the greatest of the condottieri, to the highest pinnacle of power, and a condottiere he remained throughout life, alike as warrior, as ruler, and as organiser. He was persistently successful, persistently fortunate, for he knew how to turn all persons and circumstances to his own account, while he had no scruples, regarding everything as right which served his turn—craftiness, treachery, and murder. But whatever he did bore the stamp of a chance occurrence. His campaigns lacked the long and sedulous preparation which was invariable before those of Jenghiz Khan, and though they were always victorious, they were rarely decisive. His empire had no organic connexion; nothing but the ruler's personality held it together, for he built it only as his own personal expression, as the issue of his ambition, and for that reason it was as contradictory as was the man himself. Though surrounded by scholars and philosophers, down to the day of his death he never had in his service such a man as Yelü-Ch'uts'ai, the great statesman who gave Jenghiz Khan's empire its unity and its form. While he fancied himself to be refounding the empire of Jenghiz Khan, all he succeeded in doing was to destroy the Golden Horde, the last surviving Mongolian realm.

He wanted the impossible, he wanted to amalgamate urban culture and nomadic life, Islam and the Yasak. He believed that he was leading his nomads to victory, whereas in reality

he merely enlisted Turanian nomadic energy in the service of Islam. While conquering with the aid of warriors, he regarded priestcraft as of a higher order than war-making. The upshot was that Islam, which he wished to use for his own ends, enjoyed the usufruct of his conquests. He believed that, with the help of Turanians, he would definitively suppress Iran; but the Iranian culture, which he was determined to preserve, marched over him, for he was no more than a semi-nomad. What he diffused throughout Central Asia by his campaigns of conquest was, after all, Iranian culture, Iranian civilisation, and it was that civilisation which, a century later, his descendant Baber conveyed to Hindustan. He left behind him a warrior dynasty, not of rough conquerors, but of polished artists and scholars. Thus he, who intended to re-establish the old world of Mongolian greatness, was, substantially, the introducer of a splendid new epoch.

Tamerlane believed that he would bequeath to his descendants a realm that was firmly compacted, and safeguarded on every side. To test its stability, on several occasions when he was seriously ill he had a report spread that he had died, then doomed to immediate execution all those who rose in rebellion or tried to establish a dominion of their own. To avoid the wars of succession which had annihilated the realms of the Jenghizides, shortly before his death he repudiated the Mongolian tradition according to which all brothers and sons were regarded as having equal rights, and confined the direct succession to the eldest line, appointing Pir-Muhammed, the son of Jehangir, his heir. Hardly did his death become known, than disputes about the succession broke out.

Pir-Muhammed was far away in Afghanistan, and part of the army placed Tamerlane's grandson Khalil on the throne. In Persia there ensued a quarrel between the two other sons of Miran-Shah for the sovereignty of their fief. Not until chaos had lasted four years, not until Pir-Muhammed had been assassinated and Khalil driven out, did Tamerlane's youngest son, Shah Rokh succeed in extending his rule from Khorassan over Afghanistan and Transoxania, and then in regaining part of the

western empire as far as Azerbaijan. All the rest had already been lost. First the Golden Horde; then the western dominions, to Sultan Ahmed (again established in Bagdad), to the Turks, the Kurds, and the Turcomans.

Shah Rokh was both warrior and artist. As a guide to his soldiers, he issued the famous utterance: "The warrior must thrust into the centre of the fight and of the blood-bath. If wounded, he must know no other camp than the mane of his steed. Wretched is he who calls himself a man while imploring the mercy of his foe; he deserves to die the death of a dog." Nevertheless he was pacifically inclined. Under his reign, which was wise, foreseeing, and lasted forty years, the empire attained its highest glory. New life grew out of the ruins. Other towns besides Samarkand—Herat and Bokhara, for instance—became the centres of trade and of art. The renaissance inaugurated by Tamerlane continued to flourish under his successors. Rokh's son Ulugh Bey, a great scholar—the builder of the famous observatory of Samarkand, and the constructor of astronomical tables which were still used and widely renowned in Europe during the seventeenth century—was one of the gentlest sovereigns of history. But he was far in advance of his time, and was not hard-hearted enough to be a successful ruler in those days of iron. His own son dethroned and murdered him. Therewith ensued a period of universal anarchy. Almost every one of the descendants of Tamerlane was an aspirant to supreme power. Most of them succeeded, if only in a province or a town, in mounting the throne for a few years or a few months; and thereupon, while he was engaged in fratricidal warfare with his neighbours, he continued to attract artists, scholars, and poets to his court—hoping to be regarded by posterity as one who had promoted culture.

The realms of Jenghiz Khan lasted, in the main, for centuries, though under other rulers. Tamerlane's empire fell to pieces; but while the last of the Jenghizides decayed and became no more than shadow-emperors, the descendants of Tamerlane retained their personal chivalry. Even when devoid of power,

they were valiant, adventurous, and brilliant, maintaining, after they had lost their dominions in Western Asia, their reputation as "knights errant". When, a century after his ancestor Tamerlane's death, Baber was definitively expelled from Transoxania by a new nomadic wave from Turan—the Uzbegs under a Khan of the house of Jenghiz—he did not bow his head before the bludgeoning of fate, but, inspired by the adventurous tradition of his race, dreamed once more the dream of world conquest. Though he had to flee, he fled to fight for new realms. From Kabul, he followed in the footsteps of Tamerlane to Hindustan, and there, with an army organised in accordance with Jenghiz Khan's *Yasak*, founded the Mogul Empire.

But even the Uzbegs did not long maintain their grip upon any territory outside the limits of Transoxania, so that Turanian dominion over Western Asia was over and done with. During four centuries their hordes wandered over the land, crowding one another out, and engaged in a warfare of mutual destruction. They produced rulers and warriors for conquest or defence, but nowhere did they take root. It was the Iranians, humiliated, sucked dry, enslaved, who continued to carry on the arts of life; they engaged in industry and commerce, they tilled the fields and cultivated gardens; they engaged in the practice of the arts and of architecture; and, in the last resort, they once more supervised the administration of the country, whether as henchmen of the conqueror or in the service of Allah, seeing to it that the laws of the Koran were respected, and even exercising a certain amount of power over foreigners. From the priesthood, too, came a renovation. So soon as the hostile forces were disintegrated, the Sufis of Azerbaijan summoned the Iranians to revolt, and the nationalist movement continued to gain ground. Soon the whole of Western Persia had been liberated, and the Sufite Shah Ismail led his Iranian army against the Uzbegs, defeated the Jenghizides in 1510 near Merv, and reconquered Khorassan, Herat, and Balkh. A century after Tamerlane's death, modern Persia came into being. As of old, the Amu-Darya had become the boundary between Iran and Turan.

PART FIVE

THE HERITAGE

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE HEIRS

I

IN all the civilised countries of the world the power of the Mongols had been definitively broken, but under their dominion the aspect of the world had changed.

The historians of their day, most of them belonging to subjugated civilised peoples, could see nothing but that destruction and devastation, misfortune and terror, had been let loose upon mankind. Later generations were able to enjoy the advantages bequeathed by the worldwide empire. To them came the fruits of the fertilising contact between the great national cultures, which was perhaps the most outstanding requisite for the extensive changes and the unanticipated impetus of Europe during the next few centuries. Now, by the time the Mongolian realms had ceased to exist, the subjugated peoples were ripe to enter into the heritage.

When the Mongol invaders descended upon China, she was torn in sunder by civil war, was split into several portions by the mutually hostile dynasties of the Liaos, the Kins, and the Sung. The Mongols restored its ancient greatness, and unified the land so thoroughly that during the six centuries which followed their expulsion that unity was never disturbed, outlasting revolts and revolutions, new invasions, and new foreign dominion.

At the time of the first Mongolian invasion, Western Asia was little better than a rubbish heap, out of which avaricious chieftains of Turanian stock were seizing the largest morsels they could get hold of. Under the Ilkhans it achieved once more a unity forgotten for centuries. Neither the decay of the realm

of the Ilkhans nor the despotism of Tamerlane could destroy the feeling of interdependence, once it had been reawakened in the Iranians. Under the Sufis, modern Persia came into being as a heritage of the Mongols.

So long as the Mongols exercised their dominion, the unity of the continent was maintained despite their many differences and their numerous civil wars. Even their expulsion from China and the establishment of the anti-foreign Ming Dynasty, even the Central Asiatic confusions and the struggles of Iran against the descendants of Tamerlane, were not able utterly to destroy the transcontinental union, that most brilliant creation of the Mongols. The world-trade they brought into being was able to withstand these heavy blows, for the Mohammedan world did not concern itself about the intimate connexion between a country's political power and its economic successes. This only became apparent in the later history of Europe. The Moslem merchant, without help from whatever government might prevail, was able to make his way farther afield than any soldier of a Moslem conqueror, and, once the way from West to East had been disclosed to him, the caravans were continually on the march from China to Central and Western Asia, while ships sailed from Chinese ports and from the Sunda Islands to India and from India to the shores of the Persian Gulf and of the Red Sea. But the further connexion between the trading centres of Western Asia and the western world was already interrupted by the middle of the fourteenth century. Once more Egypt began to assume a leading position as intermediary in the trade between Venice and Genoa. For a time there subsisted a last possibility of the exchange of goods with Persia along the devious route by way of the Italian settlements in Crimea and the territories of the Golden Horde; but Tamerlane disturbed these communications, and after the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks, the Black Sea became nothing more than a Turkish lake.

The unity of the world (for the Eurasian continent was then the world) as it had been established by the descendants

of Jenghiz Khan in the thirteenth century, had been utterly destroyed. Now the wonderland of India, the Spice Islands, the Empire of Cathay, which, in the European mind of the day formed a unity, once more became fabulous. Europe was no longer willing to be confined within the narrow limits of the Middle Ages, and completely to renounce touch with these lands of wealth. The stimuli which had come from the Far East during the century of Mongolian dominance continued to act. Marco Polo's story of his travels and his descriptions of Asia were translated into all the leading tongues of the Western world, and were eagerly discussed by scholars who interpreted them as best they could. Whereas at first Asia disclosed itself to Europe without European intervention, now Europe thought herself ripe enough to find her way to the Far East on her own initiative and guided by her own knowledge. Inasmuch as she had been expelled from the Orient by force of arms, and was not strong enough to fight her way back along the land routes and open them for commerce, she set herself to search for a road by sea.

Genoese, Venetian, and other European merchants, following up the tracks of Marco Polo, had often made their way to the harbour of Ormuz, and thence taken ship across the Arabian Sea to Hindustan. From Arabian sources they heard rumours that Africa, on the south, was encircled by the ocean, and in due course discoverers set themselves to the task of circumnavigating Africa in order to reach the Arabian Sea. The assumption was that Africa could not stretch farther south than the Equator. Thus is Africa shown upon the maps of that time, and we have evidence that Marco Polo believed the island of Madagascar to lie southward of the African continent.

But the making of this bold attempt to navigate the unknown ocean was reserved, not for Venice or Genoa, but for the aspiring lands of the Iberian Peninsula—for Spain and Portugal. While the Italian rivals were hard at work fighting one another, and, after the defeat of Genoa, Venice was content to develop her

influence in the Mediterranean, Spanish navigators discovered the Canary Islands (it was no more than a re-discovery for these islands were already known to the Romans), while the Portuguese fleet, guided by Genoese navigators, sailed forth into the Atlantic to discover Madeira and the Azores. Since the beginning of the fifteenth century, the Infante of Portugal, Prince Henry the Navigator, had helped in promoting the exploration of the west coast of Africa; and when, in 1428, his brother brought from Venice Marco Polo's book and a map of the world on which "all the parts of the earth" were shown, and when Cape Verde was passed and the Guinea Coast reached, people became convinced that they must be on the right road to India.

Then came a great disappointment. In the Gulf of Guinea, the way was once more blocked, for the African coast appeared to extend endlessly southward.

A generation later, the Florentine cosmographer and astronomer, Paolo Toscanelli, put before the Portuguese government the plan of reaching Eastern Asia by sailing directly westward from Europe. But Portugal had lost interest in any such possibility since her venturesome navigator Bartolomeo Diaz was following the west coast of Africa farther down, hoping to circumnavigate the African continent.

The plan of Toscanelli was taken up by a hitherto almost unknown though ambitious Genoese, Christopher Columbus. In a letter of the year 1474, the Florentine astronomer Toscanelli refers to Marco Polo, describes China, and the semi-mythical kingdom of Zipangu (Marco Polo's name for what we now call Japan), of which this same Toscanelli wrote most enthusiastically: "This island is extraordinarily rich in gold, pearls, and precious stones; for, be it known, that the inhabitants make cloaks of gold with which to bedeck the temples and the palaces of their kings. . . . Certainly an attempt should be made to reach these islands." But above all it was necessary to search for the 7,440 islands which Marco Polo described as not being under the dominion of the Great Khan, and from which China was supplied with gold, costly woods, and every

kind of spice. This letter of Toscanelli is said to have had appended to it a sketch-map showing the position of the countries concerned.

It was in search of these islands that Columbus set forth in the year 1492, intending, with his three caravels, to take possession of them for the Spanish crown. The Spice Islands, India, and China, being all contemplated in the same field of vision, were regarded as one. When Columbus set forth, he bore a letter from the Spanish monarch to the Great Khan, his primary aim being to reach the mainland of Asia, "for islands can easily be missed, and in Cathay it will be possible to gain information as to their precise situation." When he reached the Bahamas, he believed himself to have discovered some of the islands mentioned by the Polos, and he lost interest in the idea of further research. Indeed, he thought it would be better not to try and reach the continent, since Marco Polo had described China as one of the mightiest realms of the world. He merely said in his report that the islands he had discovered were "favourably situated for trade with the Great Khan."

For a century and a half there had been no more Great Khans, and the Mongol Dynasty had long disappeared from the thrones of Asia. Nevertheless it was in the search for the countries which their "Pax tatarica" had opened to the West and which Marco Polo had visited when in the service of Kublai, that Europe discovered America.

Six years after Columbus' first voyage, when it was still doubtful whether or not the Genoese navigator had indeed reached the Spice Islands, Vasco da Gama, after rounding the southernmost part of Africa, arrived at the Malabar Coast of India. Within two decades thereafter, the Portuguese annihilated the Arab sea power in the Indian Ocean, gained control of the waters surrounding the Malay Archipelago and the Spice Islands, and their ships, touching at Canton, opened commercial relations with China.

The Age of Discovery had begun.

The European nations vied with one another in their endeavour

to tap these new sources of wealth, the Dutch and the English following in the tracks of the Spanish and Portuguese. England, whose geographical situation was less favourable than that of Portugal, conceived an audacious plan which did not prove realisable until our own day. Just as Portugal had doubled Africa in the South, so England wished to circumnavigate the Európasian continent on the north, to discover a North-East Passage which should be a commercial route to the Far East. One of her expeditions discovered the White Sea, into which the British ships sailed as far as Archangel, thus finding a new sea-route to the Muscovite realm, which by this time had succeeded to the domain of the Golden Horde.

II

The Golden Horde had maintained power longer than the two other Mongolian realms. Though defeated by Tamerlane, it was still strong enough to repulse the attacks of the Polish-Lithuanian armies on Russia; and even in decay it was strong enough to hold its neighbours in terror and to enforce obedience from the vassal princes. The rule of the Golden Horde over the "Russian fief" lasted for more than two centuries, and in the course of this period Russia was, except for religion, thoroughly permeated by Mongolian influences. These two centuries of Mongolian rule stamped Russia with an ineffaceable die, and determined her destinies down to the time of Peter the Great.

At the time of the Mongolian invasion, Russia consisted of no less than sixty-four separate sovereignties, upon which hundreds of princes fought for their dominions with the strong hand. Having become lesser dependencies of the Mongolian Empire, the incurably separatist principedoms had to bow before the Khans, and the citizens of the free towns, always refractory to any overlord, had to tame and to accustom to subjugation by the Khans. The Russian chroniclers had good reason for saying of the Mongols. "They were the scourge of God, designed to

turn the footsteps of the sinner into the paths of virtue." Under the heavy hand of the Mongols, a country falling into chaos and decay was cemented into the Muscovite realm formed on the Mongolian model, and taking over the tradition of the Golden Horde.

The Mongolian conquest detached Russia from the West, and incorporated it into the Mongolian world-imperial system of finance and communications. The rulers of Sarai decided Russia's destiny in every respect, and from Sarai Russia derived to a large extent its manners and customs, its modes of thought and life. The Muscovite princes, too, being more adaptable than the others, took over the Mongolian idea of empire and Mongolian capacity for war-like organisation.

The transformation which took place in the "Russian fief", the development of Moscow to become the centre of Russian territory, was not regarded by the Mongols as either extraordinary or as inimical to their system. It was the natural increase in the power "of the Muscovite viceroy of the Khans". Of course their viceroy in Moscow must be kept under observation, and must be given a snub from time to time. Occasionally the fief must be chastised, even as the power of the Mongolian viceroy of South Russia, Nogai, had been kept within bounds. Thus the campaigns which the Khans from time to time undertook against the Russian princes were not regarded as wars, but as punitive expeditions.

When, later, the Golden Horde itself began to break up into separate Khanates, it was the "Tartar" mode of life, the identity of clothing, manners, political ideas and methods, which made it easy for all the opponents of a Khan who happened for the time to be victorious (the conquered princes, the hunted noblemen) to seek asylum from the Prince of Muscovy, even as earlier they had sought asylum from such a man as Nogai. Of course his religion was not theirs; but it was not so very long since the Mongols had gone over to Islam, and many of them were ready enough to accept Christian baptism in honour of their new lord and protector.

The Grand Prince, too, was tolerant, and took Mongols into his service regardless whether they became Christians or remained Mohammedans. He assigned to them Russian towns and territories to administer and exploit, thus creating for himself a Mongolian officialdom and a Mongolian army. During the middle of the fifteenth century, the Russians watched with growing suspicion the increase of Mongol influence in the administration, and the Muscovites strongly criticised their Grand Prince Vasili, under whom the Mongols were entering Russian service in great numbers. "Why," they asked, "did you bring the Tartars on to Russian soil, and assign them towns and country districts which are taxed to provide means for their support? Why are you so excessively fond of the Tartars and their language, and why are you so immoderately harsh and oppressive to the peasants, though you give gold and silver and all good things to the Tartars?"

But this settlement of the Mongols in the frontier districts, and the granting them official positions there, adjoining such Mongol local hordes as Kazan and Astrakhan, was the most effective means of defence, making the enemy hordes impotent, and tending more and more to obliterate the distinction between the domains of the Grand Princedom of Muscovy and the typically Mongol realm. It signified a first step towards beginning a counter-offensive on the part of Moscow; so it was not by detachment from the Golden Horde, not by throwing off the "Tartar yoke", but by the conscious and deliberate acceptance of the Tartar heritage with all which it entailed, that Moscow became great and powerful.

Grand Prince Ivan III of Muscovy was already assuming the role which had hitherto been played by the Khans of the Golden Horde. He supported his vassals, the Mongol princes, in their claims to the throne of the local Khanate of Kazan; placed an army at their disposal, as formerly the Mongol Khans had placed an army at the disposal of the Grand Princes; and levied Mongol princes and their warriors to help him in his own struggles against rebellious Russian cities and his boyars who proved so

often refractory. It was with Mongol aid that he got possession of Novgorod and Pskov, that he defeated the Lithuanians and the Teutonic Knights. It was as rightful heir of the Golden Horde that he was quick to enter into relationship with the East, before the Muscovite realm had any relations worth mentioning with the West. In the year 1464 a Russian embassy was sent to Herat. A Russian merchant from Tver, Afanassii Nikitin, travelled with it, went on as far as India, and described his journeys in a book called *Wanderings beyond the Three Seas*. As in former days to Sarai, so now there came to Moscow out of the Trans-Caspian regions an embassy from the Shah of Shirvan. All this was at a period when relations between Western Europe and these lands had utterly ceased.

Only now, after relations with the East had been cemented, and after the Grand Princedom of Muscovy had emerged from provincialism and was stretching beyond its frontiers in all directions into non-Russian countries—into Sweden, Denmark, the Polish-Lithuanian Union, and Turkey—did it enter the field of vision of European policy.

Byzantium had been conquered by the Turks, and Europe was seeking a counterpoise to the Turkish peril. At the Papal court the idea began to gain ground that Russia could be made this counterpoise, and the plan was furthered by arranging for the marriage of Sophia Paleologa, the niece of the last Emperor of Byzantium, to Grand Prince Ivan III. The wedding took place in the year 1472, and this date marks the second turning-point in the history of Russia. Moscow, hitherto the heir of the Golden Horde, now became a claimant to the heritage of the Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire. A desire for the fulfilment of this claim remained alive for four-and-a-half centuries. In the year 1914, with renewed hopes of incorporating Constantinople into the Russian Empire, the Russian Minister of State overcame the resistance of Tsar Nicholas to the issue of the Russian mobilisation order.

The heiress of Byzantium, Zoe or Sophia Paleologa, brought with her a Greek court to Moscow. The pristine simplicity

of the Muscovite rulers was replaced by Byzantine ceremonial, and a stilted terminology was henceforward employed in governmental documents. Italian architects were summoned to construct stone palaces in place of the old wooden buildings of the Kremlin. By slow degrees the Mongolian notions of empire which had been a legacy of Jenghiz Khan were modified in the sense of Byzantine and Christian mythology.

The Grand Prince became Tsar—a title which, although derived from Caesar, had before this in Russia been given only to the Mongolian Khans; and the Tsar became an “autocrat”, even as “autocrator” had been one of the Byzantine imperial titles. Moscow adopted the Byzantine double-headed eagle into the Russian coat-of-arms. Above this eagle loomed three crowns—that of Moscow and those of the two Tartar Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan. Such was the explanation of the device given to the Holstein ambassador Adam Olearius as late as the seventeenth century.

Only out of this twofold heritage can we grasp the nature of Russia, of its political ideals, and of the position of its tsars, concerning which, as recently as the twentieth century, Shcheglovitov, Minister for Justice, said to Maurice Paléologue, French ambassador: “In the eyes of the Russian people, the Tsar appears as the figure of Christ on earth.”

The last of the tsars, Nicholas II, said: “God has given us the supreme dominion, and only before His throne are we responsible for Russia’s destiny.”

Whereas out of the Byzantine heritage the idea developed that the Russian Tsar was “the only orthodox sovereign in the world” and Moscow was “the third and last Rome”—the outlook of the Mongolian Khans was voiced by Ivan the Terrible when he said scornfully to the King of Poland, “You are only an appointed ruler and not a sovereign by birth, for your ‘pani’ appointed you and made you sovereign by their grace.” It was in the same vein that Ivan looked upon the King of Sweden because his councillors were his equals and the king was merely *primus inter pares*, a sort of “senior official”; and that he

reproached Elizabeth of England for not "ruling her own realm but allowing her governmental affairs to be discharged by trading peasants." Of himself, he said that he was Tsar "by God's will and not in accordance with the lusts of the unruly multitude"; and he would recognise only such oriental rulers as the Sultan of Turkey or the Khan of Crimea as Tsars and "brothers".

He was acting in the spirit of the Khans when he broke the power of the boyars, slew all whom he regarded as dangerous to his notions of autocracy, exterminated whole kinships, laid a city waste, and annually pressed his warrior caste, the lesser nobles, into the "tsarist service", prescribing for each how many horses and what weapons to provide. And while the battle in the west raged continually about frontier strips and the typical Slav territories—in the eastward direction the Muscovite realm would admit the existence of no frontiers.

It was not as a conqueror, nor yet as a crusader, that Russia advanced into Asia, but as the conscious heir of the Golden Horde. In 1570, Ivan's envoys were directed to say to the Turkish Sultan: "My Tsar is not an enemy of the Moslem faith. His servant Sain Bulat rules the Khanate of Kassimov; Prince Kaibula in Yuriev, Ibak in Suroshsk, and the Nogai Princes in Romanov." In very truth the Tartar princes in the Muscovite realm took precedence of the Russian boyars "because of their high origin". A descendant of the Khans of the Golden Horde, Simeon Bekbulatovich, became Grand Prince of all Russia. Tartar nobles intermarried with the Russian aristocracy, and the names of a number of distinguished noble families betray a Mongolian origin. When the dynasty became extinct with the death of Fedor (the son of Ivan the Terrible), Boris Godunov, who had Mongolian blood in his veins, was crowned Tsar with the approval of the Zemsky Sobor. Moscow was the direct and lawful heir of the Golden Horde.

The annexation of Astrakhan northward of the Caspian reopened the route to Persia and Central Asia which had been closed since the decline of the Mongol power. As early as the first half of the sixteenth century, the Khanate of Sibir volun-

tarily declared itself to be a vassal state of Moscow, thus opening the way across the Urals. As the White Tsar (the Tsar of the West, for white was the colour with which the Mongols denoted the West) did the sovereign of Russia enter into the consciousness of the tribes of Asia; and this is the explanation of the unexampled ease with which Russia conquered Northern Asia to the farthest limit of the continent, so that the empire came to embrace a fifth of the earth's surface.

Of course the allegiance of the tribes was at first a very loose one. Although the nomads declared their wish to become vassals of the White Tsar, this did not prevent them from seizing any opportunity that offered for attacking and burning Russian towns; and when, thereupon, the Cossacks were levied for the subjugation of Siberia, this was not looked upon as a colonial war on the part of the Tsar of the West, but as a thoroughly justifiable demand for the recognition of his sovereignty by more and more distant Tartar vassals. The Russian current was in full flow eastward towards the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. Cossacks, adventurers, and peasants migrated into the marginal regions of the Muscovite realm, settling in the vast plains of Asia, mingling with the local population, while small troops, armed with muskets and the authority of the tsars of Muscovy, ventured forth into the unknown and took possession of it.

In the year 1609, a Cossack detachment, making its way to the sources of the Yenisei, entered Mongolia proper, and levied tribute from the nomad tribes—a tribute which they had hitherto paid to Altan, Khan of Mongolia. In 1616 a Russian embassy was sent to Altan who, in return for a pledge that "the great Tsar would bestow upon him valuable gifts", declared himself ready "to enter his Majesty's service". Towards the middle of the same century, China, having now regained strength under the Manchu Emperors, defeated the Cossacks beside the Amur, and checked the further advance of Russia. The circle was closed, the heritage of Jenghiz Khan had been divided, the realm of the East and the realm of the West were neighbours once more.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE DISINHERITED

I

BESIDE the Amur, the realm of the West and the realm of the East, Russia and China, the two chief heirs of the Mongolian Empire, came into contact, and the frontier separating them, thousands of miles in length, ran henceforward through the lines of the nomads, the disinherited children of Jenghiz Khan. These latter, inhabiting an area of steppes nearly as large as the United States of America, driven out of all civilised lands, had returned to their primitive life of dwellers in tents; but in their gloomy, smoke-begrimed felt tents, wandering through the impoverished and inhospitable country from their winter quarters to their summer pastures, these hardy, slant-eyed horsemen never forgot their sometime greatness, never lost the pride of what had been a ruling caste; and never ceased to dream the dream of a new Jenghiz Khan and a new rise to power. Never became extinct in them the thought of the need for a new marshalling of their forces under a new leader. But they were determined to follow only a man who had already displayed his capacity as leader, his vigour in the fight, and his strategic talent. Every chieftain, therefore, who cherished lofty aims must prove his mettle by subduing other chieftains and subjugating neighbour tribes. Not until he had become lord of a considerable area of this mighty region of the steppes (which bore various names in various parts, such as Western Turkestan, Eastern Turkestan, Semiryechnik, Zungaria, Western Mongolia, Eastern Mongolia) could he proceed, arms in hand, to establish his claim to a wider dominion. Thus every attempt at Mongolian unification, every rising of the steppes against

adjoining civilised countries, was preceded by prolonged fraternal strife which weakened the nomads before they were ready to attempt an outward thrust. The policy of China aimed at promoting dissensions which would disintegrate their strength.

What Jenghiz Khan had long ago dreaded, what had led him to undertake a war of annihilation against the Kin Empire, and what robbed him of rest even on his deathbed, now actually occurred. The Chinese incited Mongols against Mongols, supported the weaker unions of tribes against the stronger, bestowed high-sounding titles upon the princes whom they favoured, actually paid salaries to these, thus winning allies in the enemy camp, who fought under Chinese orders, sowing more and more dissensions among the people of the steppes.

The steppe area in which the nomads dwelt was from the first elastic in its boundaries. If an impact from any direction shook the frontier, it was transmitted hither and thither, to produce the same pressure in some very different place. When China flung the Mongols back into Mongolia, the tribes which were driven out, having been forced westward, attacked the Oirats, the Mongols who lived in those parts. The Western Mongols, who, since Kaidu's days had remained independent, preserving their primitive character, were ever unwilling to recognise the superiority of their cousins who had adopted Chinese ways, and the upshot was that fraternal strife began in Mongolia and lasted three hundred years, always to the advantage of China.

First China entered into an alliance with the Oirats, and the comparatively civilised Eastern Mongolians (who had been modified by Chinese influence), being now assailed from both sides, were crushed. Then, when they had grown so weak that they seemed likely to undergo complete subjugation at the hands of the Oirats, the Chinese suddenly assumed the role of their protectors, and fought with them against the Western Mongols. But even after this struggle had been going on for a hundred years, the strength of the nomads was so considerable that soon Essen-Buka, a dauntless warrior, was able to gather

some of the tribes round him, march into China, drive before him the imperial army through the northern provinces, and at length inflict a crushing defeat upon it between Kalgan and Peking. The Emperor was taken prisoner. China seemed threatened with a return of the days of Jenghiz Khan, but Essen-Buka's calibre was not that of the great conqueror. Though proud at having won a signal victory over this formidable foe, he did not know how to turn it to the best advantage. Instead of making a straight drive on Peking, he diverged northward, to seek better pastures. Not until the Chinese, having rallied after their defeat and appointed a new emperor, refused to pay the ransom he demanded for his exalted prisoner, did he appear, enraged, beneath the walls of Peking. The favourable moment had passed, and after a few skirmishes Essen-Buka withdrew and accepted a peace which brought him little profit. When he died ten years later, decay set in. "The Mongolian tribes dispersed in the search for water and good pastures, and their armies no longer formed a fighting unit," reports the Chinese chronicle. For two centuries the steppes relapsed into internal strife.

Now and again, it might be in the East, it might be among the Zungarians, and it might be in Eastern Turkestan or among the Oirats, a pugnacious chieftain would begin assembling the tribes. But in almost every case he died before his work was finished, and his death invariably signified the end of the realm he had tried to establish. The tribes he had unified fell away, having been robbed of their leader, to form other pacts, and constitute no less fugitive realms. The population of the steppes was a mass in unceasing movement, rising to peaks here and there, flowing across the frontiers and back again, and exhausting its energies in these useless movements. Meanwhile the standards of life continually fell. Incessant warfare decimated the population, destroyed the herds, wasted property. Such enterprises as were undertaken across the frontiers during this period were mere raids; and, to check them once for all, a Chinese statesman named Wan-chun-hu, who knew Mongolia well, memorialised the Chinese government in 1570 to the following effect:

"Buddhism forbids bloodshed, prescribes confession, recommends a virtuous life; for this reason we should do our utmost to diffuse that faith among the nomads."

The Ming Dynasty had grown weak. For a long time, now, the emperors had been negotiating with the Mongols, even paying them tribute instead of fighting them, had repaired the Great Wall as a means of defence instead of thrusting into the heart of Mongolia. Thus it was, perhaps in part owing to their intrigues, that the dangerous Dayan Khan (whose raids had carried him far into China so that he actually burned the suburbs of Peking) was won over to Lamaism. At a kuriltai he made it the Mongolian State religion, with the result that sacred books were sent from Tibet, and upon the ruins of Karakorum the Lamaist monastery Erdeni-Tsu was built. Throughout Mongolia monasteries and temples were built at the cost of the princes and the people, and the Tibetan teachers had so much surplus wealth to dispose of that, in order to win new converts, they bestowed upon anyone who had learned their prayers a cow or a horse.

This is probably a unique instance of the use of religion as a means for rendering pacific a too powerful neighbour, of undermining the warlike spirit of a people by introducing a pacifist cult with an imposing ritual and much display, and with saints, demons and devils to capture their imagination. It is a unique instance, too, of checking the increase of a warlike population by inducing most of the potential warriors to become celibate monks. So successful was this policy, that, "during the last fifty years of the Ming Dynasty there was no need to light a watch-fire on the boundaries of China."

Nevertheless, at the opening of the seventeenth century a new movement ran through the steppes, with "unity" as its watch-word. Perhaps it was the unified religion which gave birth to it; but, however, that may be, unity was demanded by the mightiest of the nomad leaders who were beginning simultaneously to extend their dominion at three limits of the steppe-girdle—though there can be no doubt that each of them, when

he spoke of unity, meant that the others were to submit to his rule. The tribes of Mongolia saw their freedom and independence threatened from three sides. The most dangerous seemed to be the powerful Likdan Khan of the Chahar Mongols, whose dominion was established in the south-east of Mongolia, and for fear of him the East Mongolian princes, whom he chiefly threatened, joined forces with their neighbours across the Khingan Mountains, the kindred people of Manchuria. The Manchurian tribes, under an able sovereign and dauntless warrior, had just succeeded in occupying the Liao-tung peninsula in the north-east of China, and were advancing towards Mongolia. The Mongolians could not fail to regard them as a menace, but, at the moment, this danger seemed less serious than that threatened by Likdan Khan. In alliance, therefore, the Eastern Mongolians and the Manchurians defeated the Khan, and then continued the war against China which the Manchus had started. They conquered the Chinese army; the Manchurian ruler, with the aid of the Mongols, overthrew the Ming Dynasty, and mounted the imperial throne of China to begin a new dynasty, known as the Manchu Dynasty.

But while these struggles were going on in the East, in Central Asia a huge nomadic realm came into being. Batur-Huntaichi, Khan of the Zungarians, had succeeded in uniting the Western Mongolian tribes, at a kuriltai had secured the acceptance of a code of laws which was to be binding on all, and had made the Khans swear: "We will no longer endure any dissension among the Mongolian tribes, we will no longer treat as slaves men who are of the same blood as ourselves, we will not give them as property to men of another stock, and we will not shed their blood." Instantly, as if slumbering forces had but awaited this unification in order to discharge themselves, a sudden expansion began. The unified tribes invaded Semirychensk, Turkestan, Tibet, the Pamirs, moved northward over the Irtysh, crossed the Tobol and the Ural, left Astrakhan untouched, and marched down both banks of the Volga. Under Batur's son Galdan, in the second half of the seventeenth century, a unified realm of

nomads extended from Siberia to the Himalayas, from Western Mongolia to the shores of the Caspian. The old Turkish-Mongolian fief of Jagatai had been re-established and had been enlarged in all directions beyond its ancient boundaries, as if determined to bring everything that was steppe under the rule of the riders of the steppe. At length Galdan with his hosts turned eastward to subjugate Mongolia proper, the original tribal home.

This invasion by Galdan struck terror into the hearts of the tribes of Mongolia proper. Forsaking their pastures, they fled eastward. But Galdan overtook them at the Kerulen, and, in a three-days' battle, inflicted a decisive defeat upon them. This decided the fate of Mongolia. She could no longer maintain her independence and freedom with her unaided forces. Hemmed in to the north and to the south by Russia and China, harried from the west by Galdan, the only question which remained open was to which of the three she should submit.

Between the Mongolian tribes and Galdan's Turkish-Mongols from the west, enmity had persisted for three hundred years, and it was unthinkable that they, the pure Mongols, should submit to the rule of men whom they regarded as inferiors. They had to choose, then, between the White Tsar of the West and the Emperor of the East. The throne of China was now occupied by Manchus, by emperors of their own kith and kin, who owed their position in large measure to the aid of Mongolian princes. It was natural, therefore, that the Mongol Khans should follow the example of these princes who were half vassals and half allies of the Emperor of China. At a kuriltai held in the autumn of 1691 they unanimously agreed to swear fealty to the Manchus. The Emperor of China became protector of Mongolia.

When only 200 miles from Peking, Galdan and his army came into conflict with the united Manchurian, Mongolian, and Chinese forces. Galdan's men had nothing but their old-fashioned weapons, bows and arrows, whereas the imperial army had firearms—both small arms and artillery. It was also

greatly superior in numbers, and the Manchu Emperor gained a complete victory.

Thereupon the youthful Manchu Dynasty, at the height of its power, was not content with having saved Mongolia, but made the most of its victory by pursuing the enemy and pressing westward across the Altai Mountains, pushing the boundaries of China 300 miles farther into Central Asia. From this moment the history of the Asiatic steppes was the history of the Mongolian policy of the Manchu Dynasty and recorded the conquest of Central Asia by China.

II

Cruelly, pitilessly, in the beginning of the eighteenth century China under Manchu rule thrust onward into Central Asia. This was the century in which the Turkish-Mongolian tribes made a heroic struggle that may, perhaps, be compared with the desperate resistance made by the Red Indians of North America against the advance of the Whites. There were foolhardy attacks by small detachments of horsemen who had penetrated a thousand miles or more into hostile country, suffering the torments of hunger and thirst, burning heat or freezing cold, eluding again and again forces a dozen times as large as themselves, retreating into deserts or savage mountain gorges; encircled by foes; cutting their way through, and indefatigably continuing a hopeless struggle. No oppression, no persecution, could break their resistance; again and again revolts flamed up in subjugated territories; again and again were the Manchurian armies driven back, until, towards the middle of the century, the Manchu generals adopted the ruthless but effective measures which the Mongolian commanders, had it not been for Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai, would have employed against the Chinese—the extermination of the foe. They cut down the Central Asiatic nomads wherever they encountered them. "Searching every cranny in which unarmed old men, women, and children could hide, they slew them to

the last soul. Nearly a million persons were killed in those days, the result being that even now, while in Manchukuo there are about 2,000,000 Mongols and another 2,000,000 in Mongolia, in the whole of Chinese Turkestan and the environing territory there are not as many as 1,000,000 Mongols.

Horror seized the unhappy nomads of Central Asia. Those who escaped being put to the sword fled the country, into the interior of Tibet, or into the lands peopled by the Kirghiz or the Cossacks, who were all among their enemies. Ten thousand families sought refuge in Russia, and the depopulated country was slowly repeopled by various Turcoman tribes. The Central Asiatic Mongol realm ceased to exist, the last remnants of Western Mongols being dispersed for ever.

But even in foreign countries, among an alien population, the Mongolian tribes did not lose either their pride or their love of freedom, for which, if they could no longer fight, they could at least die.

When the Kalmucks (as the Russians called the Western Mongols) first penetrated the territories of the Muscovite power, and were summoned to submit themselves to the Tsar, they replied: "The Kalmucks have always been free and independent, slaves to no one, nor do they ever become slaves." But as time went on the tribal chieftains learned that the recognition of Russian supremacy entailed certain advantages. The reputation of being on terms with the White Tsar elevated them above their fellows; the gifts and the alliances he bestowed on them meant much to an impoverished people, and the services demanded in return were trifling. No more was asked than the protection of the transit trade of Russian caravans through the territories they inhabited; for already by the end of the seventeenth century Russian furs, leathers, and textiles were being exported to China, while China was sending in return silks, spices, and brocades.

But in the eighteenth century came the third great change in Russian policy. Peter the Great opened, for Russia, "a window to the West" leading the country over which he ruled away from Asiatic and towards European civilisation. Therewith

came a decline of interest in the Russian domains eastward of the Urals. The administration of these was left to semi-independent governors who used their position as a means for self-enrichment, applying the arts of extortion and oppression to the nomad tribes.

When one of these Russian governors began to use such methods systematically against the Kalmucks, they bore their fate for a while with Asiatic fatalism, but ultimately their pride rose in revolt. Their complaints availed nothing, their threats were treated with contempt. After the bitter experience of the struggle against China they knew that by force of arms they could do nothing, and that the attempt would only seal their fate. The Khan, therefore, assembled his tribes, amounting to 75,000 tents, and, one day, the whole populace disappeared, the pastures being left vacant. With all their cattle, their carts, their tents, and every scrap of their possessions, they had trekked eastward into their old home. The Russian authorities tried to hold them back, sent troops after them, hunted them with Cossacks, induced other hostile tribes to bar their passage—but nothing could induce them to return. Surrounded by foes, fighting for bare life, they moved on without fail. Men and women died, beasts dropped from exhaustion, the whole line of route was strewn with corpses, but nothing made them alter their direction. They perished from hunger in the desert, so that scarcely a fourth of those who had set out reached their native steppes, where the Chinese officials now welcomed them with joy as settlers of depopulated districts. The Russian court claimed them as subjects, but the Emperor of China declared they had only returned to their old habitations, where their ancestors had lived from time immemorial. Thus matters were left.

III

The history of Mongolia differed from that of Eastern Turkestan. From the first the Mongolian chieftains had been

allies of the Manchus, not enemies, and they served the Manchus as vassals. To begin with, and so long as the new dynasty did not feel firmly established in China, they tried to keep the Manchurians and Mongolians who remained settled in their ancient home free from Chinese influence, regarding them as a possible reservoir of energy for future struggles in China. Chinese were forbidden to settle among them or to sell them goods on credit, for had this been permitted it might have made them dependent upon the Chinese. But the Mongolian princes thwarted these intentions by themselves attracting Chinese colonists. They had land and to spare, which they were glad to let on lease, so that they could buy the grain which they needed from local Chinese farmers. This colonisation was a luxury in which the lords of the country indulged. They themselves regarded with contempt those who tilled the soil, thereby becoming enslaved to it—and even to-day no Mongol will become a cultivator unless under the spur of extreme poverty.

Besides, as the Manchu Dynasty began to feel itself firmly established in China and more and more adopted Chinese ways, the attitude of the Emperors towards their former allies was modified. Regarding themselves now as Chinese, their prime concern was with the interests of the Middle Kingdom. They no longer wanted their neighbours in the north to remain strong from the military point of view, but looked upon their martial virtues and claims as a danger, for the Mongols never forgot that it was they who had helped the Manchus to the throne of China.

The upshot was that in Peking there was a return to the policy of the Mings. The formation of great coalitions of the tribes was discountenanced, and antagonisms were fostered by giving some of the princes high-sounding titles, by creating more and more principalities, and bureaucratising the feudalist regime. A legend was circulated that the Son of Likdan, the last of the great Mongol Khans, had handed over to the Manchu Emperor the seal of the Yuen Dynasty, so that the Manchu rulers became the rightful sovereigns of all the Mongolian princes, and these

latter, at any rate in the districts bordering on China, were placed under the tutelage of Peking. Manchurian generals and residents in Kalgan, Jehol, and Kuei-hua-cheng watched their every movement. They were deprived of the right of summoning a kuriltai, this right being reserved for Peking. A dignitary from the Chinese capital opened the kuriltai and sat as chairman during its deliberations. At the same time everything was done to promote the spread of Lamaism, which educated its adherents for a contemplative life, training them to despise passions and acquisitiveness. In this way the steppe of the warrior tribes was transformed into a land of monasteries and prayer-wheels.

As early as the beginning of the nineteenth century the Chinese chronicler could write concerning the success of this policy: "The Mongols have for the most part been scattered, living as nomads in the vicinity of Chinese military camps or under the protection of the towns. They wander destitute and as beggars. Their poverty is indescribable, and arouses the utmost compassion." Later European travellers could not contain their astonishment at "this transformation of the terrible, indefatigable, and cruel warriors into slothful, cowardly, and docile camel-drivers and shepherds." The whole nation was brought up to put its trust in rewards that would be bestowed in a future life, and this faith had utterly destroyed the terrible energy of the forefathers before whom the world had trembled. China ruled, and triumphantly its writers declared: "The weakness of the Mongols is a benefit for China, and the control of Mongolia by Buddhism is one of the most important political rules of China."

The tradition of Jenghiz Khan seemed to have been forgotten, and to have been replaced by that of Arik-Lama, the founder of Lamaism in Mongolia. Every second son of the now comparatively infertile Mongolian families was destined for the priestly profession, so that the walls of the monasteries enclosed nearly half the men; into the monasteries went the wealth of the nation, which was still further lessened by disease and high infant mortality. It was inevitable that these gigantic but thinly populated

territories, at the gates of a China which had scant room for its 300,000,000, should exercise an overpowering lure. As soon as the prohibition of migration into Mongolia was annulled by the later Manchu Emperors, a stream of Chinese colonists invaded the country, disregarding the ancient Mongolian tradition that the earth was sacred, that no more land must be ploughed than was absolutely necessary, and that the same area should never be ploughed two years in succession. From the southern border, Mongolia began to be transformed into ploughland. Nor were the Chinese merchants content now with the frontier markets, but carried their wares into the steppes and the mountains, settling in the neighbourhood of the monasteries, obtaining land, cattle, and wool by sale on credit. Then the gradual, peaceful permeation of the country was systematised at the instance of the Chinese government. Chinese settlement in Mongolia was promoted in the 1870's, because, when Russia's southward expansion against Turkey had been checked by the European powers, Russia turned her eyes eastward. Again in the 'nineties, after the China-Japan war, when Manchuria and Mongolia became declared aims of both the Russians and the Japanese, Chinese immigration was fostered.

Land was bought or simply taken from the Mongols, was partitioned and settled—now rapidly, after railways had begun to open up the country, and the thrifty Chinese settlers found it possible to export the products wrung from the newly acquired soil. The areas which had been settled by the Chinese passed under Chinese civil administration. The nomads gradually withdrew into the interior of the country. If the new pastures were insufficient for their herds, there were always Chinese traders near at hand, to whom horses, camels, and sheep could be sold. Attempts at risings on the part of the Mongols were cruelly and bloodily suppressed.

Thus year after year the Mongols found themselves crowded out. During these forty years of colonisation, the racial frontier along the whole extent of the country was placed more than seventy miles northward, until, in the twentieth century, the

Mongols of the south, those of Inner Mongolia, came to form only one-third of the population. What had been their country was covered by a network of villages, towns, and fortified points subdivided into forty or fifty tribes. They could no longer live in their ancient tribal fashion, wandering whithersoever they pleased, but only in small communities of two or three families within strictly defined limits. Whereas formerly the towns had decayed and perished because of the vicinity of the nomads, now nomadism seemed doomed to extinction because of its encirclement by farmers and other settlers.

Chinese colonisation extended from Inner Mongolia to the northern part of the country known as Outer Mongolia, as soon as Russia, in consequence of the defeat sustained in the Russo-Japanese war, abandoned her claims on Manchuria. But the enemies of yesterday soon came to an understanding at China's expense. Russia recognised the territory eastward of the 117th meridian of longitude, the meridian of Peking, as in the Japanese sphere of interest, and Japan reciprocally recognised all of Outer Mongolia that lay westward of that meridian as in the Russian sphere of influence. This meant that Mongolia between Russia and China was to be delivered to Russian penetration. Thereupon China promptly set to work to colonise the whole route from Inner to Outer Mongolia, from Kalgan to Urga, even building barracks, which were occupied by a Chinese division.

The fate which had overtaken Inner Mongolia seemed now to be imminent for Outer Mongolia, separated from China by the Gobi desert, and, hitherto immune from Chinese colonisation, still able to maintain its population, its traditions, and a certain measure of independence. The attempts of Outer Mongolia to resist were promptly suppressed, but this country bordered on Russia, and whoever fled into Siberia from the vengefulness of the Chinese could be sure of a friendly welcome, of protection, and even of sympathy in the fight for independence. When, therefore, at the beginning of the year 1911 the princes of Outer Mongolia under the presidency of Hutuktu, the "Living Buddha", of Urga, got together, and resolved upon a separation

from China, they sought aid from the White Tsar in Russia. A delegation was sent to St. Petersburg to ask protection and arms.

When, that same year, the revolution broke out in China, and the Manchu Dynasty was overthrown, these northern Mongols drove out the Chinese officials and declared themselves independent. They had never regarded themselves as part of China, and had never recognised Chinese suzerainty. They had merely sworn fealty to the Manchu Emperors and had kept their oath, but now, when there were no more emperors, they were free. Vainly were they assured that the Republic had taken over the whole heritage of the Empire, that the new five-coloured banner symbolised the five nations of China, one of which was the Mongolian—they would not hear a word of it—they demanded complete independence, and when the Russians, in view of the danger of international complications, would guarantee nothing more than the autonomy of Northern or Outer Mongolia, they declared that if the world would not recognise an independent Mongolian State comprising all the Mongols, they would rather die sword in hand than allow Mongolia to be dismembered and rather than purchase the freedom of Outer Mongolia by permitting the enslavement of their brethren in the east and the south.

Chinese dominion had lasted five centuries and a half. The nomads had been fought with every kind of weapon; they had been suppressed by all possible means; their power had been broken, their wealth and their land had been taken from them, and nothing left untried to make them forget their warlike traditions. But here all the arts and all the cunning of the Mings and the Manchus failed. The essential nature of the Mongols never changed. They had not become Chinese subjects, and a very small impetus was needed to induce them to shake off their alleged pacifism, their dull submission to fate. Once more the old national pride awakened, the old sense that all Mongols were of one flesh, and they were ready to risk their lives as before.

Never, even in the days of their deepest humiliation, had the Mongols forgotten their ancient greatness. In the veins of their princes still flowed the blood of Jenghiz Khan, and in their hearts his figure and his tradition were still alive. When the treaty was at length signed guaranteeing the autonomy of Outer Mongolia by Russia, the Mongolian minister remarked—jokingly, as the Russian negotiators declare—that this was the first step towards the establishment of direct relations between Mongolia and Russia since the Mongols had invaded Russia in the thirteenth century. A Manchurian colonel said to a Russian writer at a dinner-party: “Yes, we have loved war as much as you Russians. Your Moscow was conquered by our Emperor, and here in China we had many Russian prisoners as our servants.” Round the camp-fires, from generation to generation has been handed down as part of the Mongolian saga the saying: “When the most lasting thing on earth, the Empire in the North and the Empire in the South, falls in ruins, and the White Tsar in Russia and the Son of Heaven in China have vanished—then will there arise a new Jenghiz Khan, to create a new Mongolian worldwide Empire.”

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EPILOGUE

THE KEY OF ASIA

I

AT the opening of the twentieth century, when the Powers were about to delimit their spheres of influence in the Far East, no one bothered about the Mongols. Mongolia was merely a geographical expression for a vast plateau between China proper and Siberia, politically classified into three parts lying north, east, and south, and including within its bounds a large part of the Gobi Desert. Even China, though claiming suzerainty over all Mongolia, regarded it as no more than a colonial region where those persons of Mongol stock who still clung to a nomadic life had some right to exist in the less useful regions, but only as shepherds of the flocks that supplied the Middle Kingdom with wool.

Yet as soon as the time came for safeguarding their respective spheres, it grew apparent to the Powers that the "geographical expression" had a living content; that there was a Mongolian nation which put forward national demands.

A Mongolian Question emerged. If Japan wished to establish her grip upon Manchuria, and Russia to plant herself in Outer Mongolia, the Japanese or the Russians would have to win over the Mongolians; and if China wanted to prevent the growth of Russian or Japanese influence, she must impose her own civilisation upon predominant strata of Mongolians, and must substitute a Chinese for a Mongolian administration. These considerations determined the attitude of the respective Powers towards Mongolia, and each awaited a favourable opportunity.

Immediately after the outbreak of the Great War, China wished to suppress the rule of the Mongol chieftains, and began



to establish Chinese provinces—Jehol, Chahar, Suiyuan, and Ninghsia—in Inner Mongolia; while Japan instigated Mongolian risings. Though these were suppressed, with much bloodshed, a friendly feeling towards Japan was fostered. When tsarist Russia collapsed, and civil war prevailed on many fronts throughout the whole extent of what had been the Russian Empire, China sent General Hsu across the Gobi into Outer Mongolia.

The officially avowed motive was to prevent the extension of the civil war from Siberia. The towns of Outer Mongolia surrendered to Hsu's troops, but he did not occupy the northern frontier. Remaining in Urga, the capital, Hsu imprisoned Hutuktu, the "Living Buddha", and his ministers, and tried to extort from them a renunciation of their autonomy, and a request for the appointment of a Chinese governor.

Soon in all the monasteries prayers were being said for deliverance from the Chinese, who were regarded as hereditary foes; and White Russian troops, retreating before the Reds in Siberia, crossed the Mongolian frontier. One of the White leaders, Baron von Ungern-Sternberg, gathering Mongolian levies, defeated and expelled the Chinese and occupied Urga. At first he was hailed as a deliverer, and boasted: "I am creating a realm by reviving and modernising the methods of the old Turkish and Mongolian warriors." But his terrorist regime soon made him hated by the Mongolians and even by his own followers.

A revolutionary Mongolian People's Party was now formed in Siberia, and, aided by the Russian Reds, defeated the White levies. Ungern-Sternberg was taken prisoner, court-martialled, and shot. The "Living Buddha" prepared for the new deliverers a triumphal reception at Urga. Had they not come with the slogan: "Independence for the Mongolian People"?

A provisional revolutionary government was established. Hutuktu became nominal head of the State of Outer Mongolia, retaining the title of Ejen Khan (Lord King), but was restricted to the management of religious affairs. A campaign against the feudal magnates ensued. The whole of Outer Mongolia with its mineral treasures, forests, and rivers was declared to be the

property of the Mongolian people; the territorial magnates and their retainers, comprising a sixth of the population, being dispossessed. There were counter-revolutionary conspiracies, and members of the revolutionary government were assassinated. The conspirators were put to the torture and executed.—Meanwhile China continued to protest and to demand that the Soviet government should evacuate Outer Mongolia.

We have reached 1924. The United States having brought pressure to bear, the Japanese withdrew from Eastern Siberia and restored Kiao-chow to the Chinese. The Chinese were in process of forming a strong centralised government, which was glad to ally itself with anyone who would help in the subjugation of autocratic Chinese war-lords in the north. The Soviet government began to conceive hopes of something much bigger than a slice of Mongolia, and to placate the Chinese was ready to make concessions. Outer Mongolia would be recognised as an essential part of the Chinese Republic, but must remain self-governing, "Chinese interference in the internal affairs of Mongolia being prohibited." Red Russian troops were actually withdrawn—after the Autonomous People's Republic of Mongolia had been proclaimed, the undependable Mongolian army chief and vice-president had been shot, and Hutuktu, the "Living Buddha", had died (steps having been taken to guard against a "reincarnation"). Soviet advisers remained in Urga, Soviet instructors supervised educational matters and provided for military training in the Red spirit. A bank supplied with Soviet funds was established to help in the economic development of the country. But the Great Kuriltai or representative assembly which had proclaimed the Autonomous People's Republic was formed of Mongolians; persons of Mongolian blood ruled and issued orders; and it seemed to the popular imagination that the independence of the country was assured.

But the face of China was saved, for Outer Mongolia remained "an integral constituent of the Chinese Republic." The Soviet government was most accommodating; denounced "unequal treaties", desired no privileges, no concessions, no extra-

territorial rights; declared itself utterly opposed to imperialism. Sun Yat-Sen, the spiritual father of the Chinese revolution, regarded the Russian Reds as the liberators of the weaker nations, and the champions of these against the encroachments of the Great Powers.—China began to adopt communist ideas, and Mongolia to enter into independent foreign relations.

During the years 1925–26 there was a Mongolian Commercial Delegation in Berlin, ordering machinery, engaging engineers, and trying to arrange for trade with various States. This was followed up by a delegation of Mongolian students, headed by the minister for education. The Mongolian government had a map of the country printed in Berlin. But the Commercial Delegation was soon withdrawn, arrangements were made to carry on foreign trade through Soviet agents, Russian consuls being impowered by the U.S.S.R. to represent the interests of other countries as well as those of their own. The students' delegates likewise disappeared—although a Mongolian plenipotentiary is said to have resided in Berlin as late as 1934. But by that time the situation in the Far East had undergone extensive changes.

The Chinese central government in Nanking, as soon as it made sure of its victory over the northern war-lords, managed to get rid of its Soviet advisers, and declared war upon the communist movement in China. Armies were dispatched against the communist centres, and new waves of Chinese colonisation flowed into Inner Mongolia; while in Outer Mongolia, since China was no longer friendly, a fresh revolutionary movement began.

The movement against feudal institutions took on the form of a class war. Socialist and collectivist measures were instituted, the herds of the big stock-raisers were declared communal property; and the owners slaughtered their beasts rather than hand them over to a public authority. Anyone who could, emigrated.

It was at this time that Japan got seriously to work upon her schemes of continental aggrandisement, annexing Manchuria

and founding the "independent" state of Manchukuo. Being unable to count upon the support of the Chinese members of the population, she did her utmost to win over the Mongolian inhabitants. By prohibiting any further Chinese immigration, Japan ensured that room should be left for the nomads, severing the autonomous province of Hsingan as a centre for Mongolian nationalist aspirations. The refugees from Outer Mongolia made for this area, the harassed Mongolian aristocracy going eastward into Manchukuo. Pu Yi, a descendant of the Manchu Emperors of China and ruler of Manchukuo, announced: "We shall establish a great Mongolian realm, a land of peace and earthly happiness for the Mongols."

With the formation of this new State, there ensued a change in the position of the other parts of Mongolia. Hitherto Inner Mongolia had been threatened from the south by Chinese colonisation and from the north by the revolution. Its aristocrats, transformed from tribal chieftains into large-scale stock-farmers with privileges in pastures and land, enriched by the sale of sheep, cattle, and estates to the Chinese, had adopted Chinese ways, preferred the amenities of town life to the hardships of a nomadic existence, found it more comfortable to drive in motor cars than to career about on horseback, and sent their sons to Chinese universities. These same young bloods, however, were disposed to take over the destinies of their own land, but China refused at first to make any concessions. As soon as a new Mongolian centre was formed in Manchukuo, China declared herself willing to concede a certain measure of independence to Inner Mongolia, and began to protect the chieftains and the lamas.

The government of the People's Republic of Outer Mongolia reacted by cancelling its decrees for socialisation. Live-stock was again regarded as private property, and the formation of collective agricultural enterprises was discontinued. But Outer Mongolia categorically refused to enter into diplomatic relations with Manchukuo. When the latter thereupon declared Outer Mongolia to be a "danger zone" whose existence on its frontiers

could not be tolerated, Soviet Russia responded by entering into an offensive and defensive alliance with the Mongolian People's Republic; equipped Outer Mongolia with airports, wireless stations, and hundreds of armoured cars; established a military academy in Urga; founded machine-gun works, munition factories, and textile mills; provided the Mongolian army with up-to-date weapons; and made the herdsmen into warriors once more.

Thus in 1932 there happened what Mongolia had tried to prevent two decades earlier when Mongolian national aspirations began to be voiced. The country was severed into three parts, under distinct leadership, each having its own peculiar prospects and developmental trends. But in each of these three parts the propagandists of the rival Powers—China, Russia, and Japan—continued at work.

As we are informed in the quasi-legendary Tanaka report, if Japan is to conquer China, she must first get possession of Mongolia, and must begin by achieving control of Manchuria. It remains uncertain whether Tanaka really penned the aforesaid memorial and actually submitted it to the Emperor of Japan. The document may have been invented by Japan's enemies. But at any rate the formation of Manchukuo and the policy pursued by that State would be unmeaning unless Mongolia was the goal. The resources of Manchuria, in Japanese hands, would certainly help to solve without armed conflict the problem of access to the raw materials which are so urgently needed by the Island Empire. Timber, coal, iron, aluminium, manures, oats, millet, soya beans, etc., could be obtained in abundance. Nevertheless Manchuria, sandwiched between Russia and China, could not serve as the basis for an expansionist colonial policy, and would tend, rather, to endanger the Japanese homeland. That was why Japan created the new State of Manchukuo "as the first step towards the re-establishment of the East; the reconquest of the freedom and the glory of Asia, which was the mother of civilisation."

Manchukuo was to be a platform for the extension of Japanese

continental influence; but any open endeavour to advance into Outer Mongolia would infallibly lead to complications with Russia, and probably to war, so official relations between Manchukuo and the Mongolian People's Republic were restricted to "frontier incidents", often attended by bloodshed.

For the time being, Japan's political activities in this part of the world were confined to Inner Mongolia, where a Mongolian prince named Teh declared the Chinese provinces of Chahar and Suiyuan independent of the Middle Kingdom, and prepared to organise them as the State of Mongkuo. But the Japanese hopes that large numbers of Mongolians would rally to the support of this chieftain were frustrated. Encircled by Russia, China, and Japan, courted by each in turn, but at length aware that they were looked upon as mere pawns in a wider game, the Mongolians grew mistrustful, and were loth to commit themselves.

Reporting to the League of Nations on Manchukuo, the Lytton Commission declared: "Although certain Mongolian elements are giving sincere but cautious support, they will withdraw this whenever they think that the Japanese threaten their independence or their economic interest." They were glad to find that their situation was bettered, that their pastures were being safeguarded, but the Japanese had not brought them the freedom for which they hoped. Nowhere was a genuine movement for Mongolian enfranchisement allowed to make headway; throughout the country the military and political influence of the Japanese grew stronger; and Mongolian youths were sent to Japan for education. True, the Japanese advance into Inner Mongolia was taking place under the watchword: "It is our mission to help the Mongolian race to free itself from Chinese oppression"; but, for this very reason, to the stimulated national sentiment of a subject people which was proud of the traditions of ancient greatness the new tutelage was exceptionally irksome.

The rigorous control established by the Japanese in the Mongolian districts of Manchukuo led to anti-Japanese conspiracies and risings which (so the Japanese declared) were fostered

by Mongolian officials. Reprisals and executions followed. A sign of widespread disaffection among the Mongols was that the Japanese thought it expedient to shoot the Mongolian governor of Hsingan Province, who was also chief of general staff and head of the police, declaring him to be a Russian spy. The very refugees from Outer Mongolia, the men who had fled to Manchuria during the collectivisation epoch of 1930-1932, now declared: "We were born free nomads, and free nomads we wish to remain. We have no inclination for revolutionary movements, which we do not understand. But if we are asked whether we wish to be ruled by the Chinese or by the Japanese, we answer that we want neither the one nor the other; and that, if oppression is inevitable, we should like to return to Outer Mongolia, where at least the oppressors will be persons of our own race."

Outer Mongolia—the only region inhabited exclusively by Mongolians and ruled by Mongolians who were not compelled to render an account (officially, at least) to any alien Power—exerts a strong attractive influence as a national centre. Even the conflict of interests between the Mongolian and the Chinese elements is not so great as the Japanese in Manchukuo have been inclined to make out. When China sent troops against Prince Teh, the other Mongolian chieftains declared for China, helping to drive him, first out of Suiyuan and then out of Chahar. But when Chahar was occupied by Chinese troops in the year 1936, the three contending Powers came into direct contact in the heart of Mongolia, and the struggle entered upon its decisive phase.

II

If Japan is to conquer China, she must first get possession of Mongolia, we are told in the Tanaka report. This is true, not only because these regions are the main centres for the supply of mutton and wool to China, nor merely because Chahar contains vast ironfields, but also (and above all) because Inner

Mongolia is the most direct and most important link between China and Russia. To acquire it is, for the conqueror, to protect his flank against the Soviets. When, therefore, Japan began her campaign against China in 1937, she occupied Chahar and Suiyuan, and induced a national assembly there to declare itself the "Autonomous Government of Mongolia", which, true to tradition, dated its calendar from Jenghiz Khan's accession to power. By this advance of outposts into the Chinese continent, Japan opened the way into North China and secured the base for an attack on Outer Mongolia—but at the same time greatly enhanced the likelihood of a collision with the Soviet government, for Outer Mongolia is the most sensitive spot in the defences of Russian Eastern Asia.

The Trans-Siberian railway, the arterial line which connects European Russia with the Sea of Japan, runs parallel with and is never far from the northern frontier of Outer Mongolia. For Irkutsk, Verkhni-Udinsk, Chita, and Nerchinsk—centres for administration and supply, hives of industry and commerce—Outer Mongolia is a buffer State. Outer Mongolia in enemy hands would be the base for an attack upon the Altai-Kuznetsk basin. The Russians have only just begun to exploit this region, which is richly supplied with coal, iron ores of the best quality, and first-class timber, surrounded by excellent agricultural land, so that it could easily support a population of dozens of millions, and is likely to become one of the main sources of supply for Siberia and for European Russia as well. Being more than two thousand miles from both the eastern and the western frontier of Russia, it is beyond the present range of air-attack from either; but it is only three hundred miles from Outer Mongolia. These geographical, industrial, and strategic considerations explain why the U.S.S.R. is so much concerned to safeguard the Mongolian People's Republic, and has made great sacrifices with this end in view. The Soviet government has done much to strengthen Outer Mongolia both from the military and the economic point of view; and, by founding hospitals and pushing on with the urgently required improvement

in local hygienic conditions, has greatly aided in saving a people from extinction. Commodities and loans have been forthcoming. Outer Mongolia has coalbeds which can be worked from open seams; in the Altai Mountains are gold and silver, copper and iron, semi-precious stones. Beside the Lake of Kossogol are two mountains consisting entirely of graphite. Were it only on geopolitical grounds, Soviet Russia would at any time be willing to go to war for the sake of Outer Mongolia. That is why the occupation of Inner Mongolia by Japan, thrusting a wedge between Russia and China, could not fail to bring about a political rapprochement between the two latter Powers.

Mongolia is the key of North China and of Siberia, and also the key to the heart of Asia, to Eastern Turkestan and Tibet, by way of Tsing-hai. Close relations here seem almost inconceivable, in view of the poverty of communications and the "magnificent distances", but Asia knows other measurements than ours. Whatever happens in Mongolia finds an echo in Tibet and has repercussions in Hindustan. Advisedly the Chinese government, when centred in Peking, dealt with Mongolian and Tibetan affairs in the same office. Thousands of Mongolians live in and near Lhasa, where they are in close touch with the Dalai Lama. When the latter fled from Lhasa on the approach of Younghusband's expedition (1903-1904), he sought refuge at the Erdeni Yun monastery in the Karakorum range. On the establishment of the Mongolian People's Republic, its first foreign-political act was to enter into a treaty with Tibet, each contracting party recognising the other's independence, and each pledging the other help against enemies at home and abroad. When in the end of 1925 the Great Kuriltai was summoned in Mongolia, a Mongolian delegation was sent to Eastern Turkestan, Tibet, and far-away Siam to invite the participation of the brethren of the same blood and the same faith. Thus the whole area from the Khingan Mountains and Lake Baikal in the north-east to the Pamir Plateau in the south-west and the Himalayas in the south forms a compact continental block. Jenghiz Khan, who unified the region in the thirteenth century (except for

Tibet, at that date separated from the rest by creed), was able to make of it a platform for his conquest of the world. His descendants, though still possessing huge realms, ceased to be a world power as soon as they lost control of the Central Asian upland. Jenghiz Khan, shedding oceans of blood, united a chaotic region into a transcontinental realm, opening the era of land-empires and caravan routes. When that transcontinental unity broke up, the European spirit set out on its conquest of the world by sea-routes and sea-power, and the era of naval empires began. The continental land-routes lapsed into oblivion. The central regions of the Eurasian continent ceased to count in universal history. But now, in the twentieth century, the struggle for the dominion of Asia has been resumed, and the decision will fall, not, as was expected, in the Pacific, but on the very upland where Jenghiz Khan's rise to power began.

That is the inner significance of the struggle in Eastern Asia; it has opened a new epoch. Japan's attack upon China was initiated from the sea-board, but while her ports were pulverised, China retired into the measureless spaces of her land territories. The old caravan-routes came to life once more; and now, instead of camels laden with bales of silk, lorries freighted with fire-arms and munitions climbed the lofty passes. Modern technique had conquered the deserts and mountains, thus challenging the supremacy of the sea-powers.

The tragedy of the second World War overshadowed the conflict in Central Asia, but even at the height of the fighting on other fronts, the rivals never lost sight of their interests here. At the time when the battle of Stalingrad was being fought, Chinese insistence forced the Russians to relinquish their influence in Sinkiang, the old Kara-Khitai. Soon, however, the northern districts of that region, supplied with Russian arms, revolted against Chinese rule and proclaimed themselves an Autonomous Republic of East-Turkestan. Since then the whole of Sinkiang, the largest province in China and of outstanding strategic importance, has been drawn increasingly into the Russian orbit. Russian motor highways, Russian airlines, the great Russian Turk-Sib.

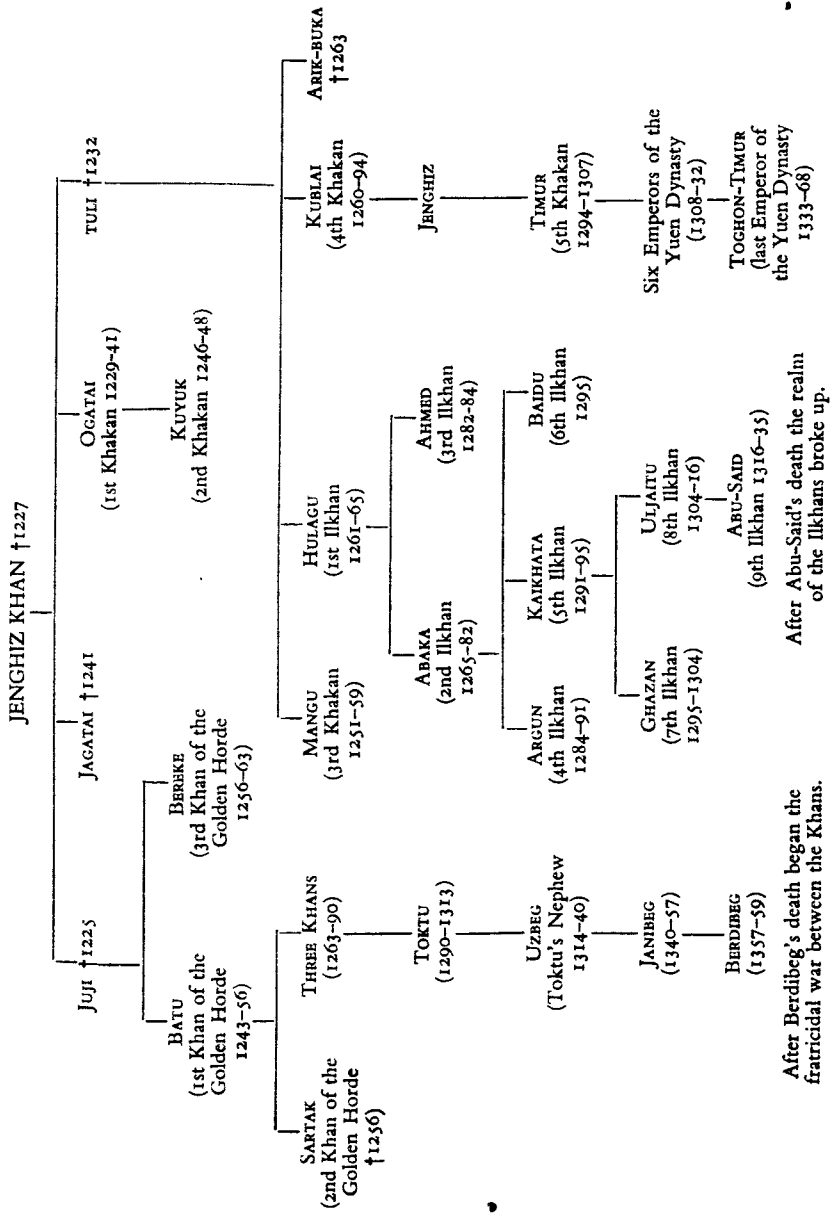
railway dominate its economic life. The Yalta Conference forced China to recognise the Republic of Outer Mongolia, and the Outer Mongolian troops who in the summer of 1945 marched into North China had the same armament and used the same methods as the Russians. Less than two years later the Mongols of Manchuria and Inner Mongolia proclaimed an Autonomous Mongolian Government with its seat at Wangyehmiao, two hundred miles to the west of Harbin, and sent their troops to help the Chinese Communists in their fight against the Nationalists.

The Nationalist Government had been able to withstand the Japanese invasion from the sea-coast, but in the course of history South China has repeatedly been conquered from the north, and Chiang Kai-shek succumbed to Mao Tse-tung. True to tradition Mao immediately raised the claim of all Far-Eastern conquerors: that of the Middle Kingdom's supremacy in Asia, though in the first instance Peking couched the claim in the form of a protest against "unequal treaties" and styled itself the first independent government in China in so far as it had abrogated the last remains of privileges enjoyed by the Western powers. With Japan defeated and expelled from the continent, there remained only two rivals for power over the Asian upland, Russia and China. But Peking's demand to be regarded as the champion of Asia's freedom is made under the Communist flag, and therefore it has to rely on Soviet support in its struggle against the West. Consequently the People's Government have forgotten Russia's record in China and even concluded new agreements "for strengthening good neighbourly relations between the two great States, China and the Soviet Union," which give Russia virtually a dominant position in Mongolia, Manchuria, and Sinkiang, all three so dear to Chinese tradition; in fact the very object of the contest for the heart of Asia.

Bur Moscow is far from Karakorum, and Russia is racially and traditionally alien to the peoples of Asia. The reappearance of China as a dynamic force in world politics has reawakened Asia's memory of her old greatness, and no Asian government thinks of Peking as a puppet of Moscow. China is old and has a

tenacious memory. Even emperors of dynasties who had for centuries ruled over China suddenly discovered that all the time they had been nothing but deeply hated barbarians "created to obey and not to command." The decision as to who is to be the true heir of Jenghiz Khan, the new lord of Asia, has not yet been made.

GENEALOGICAL TREE OF THE JENGHIZIDES



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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

- 1115 Foundation of the Kin Dynasty in Northern China after the victory over the Liaos.
- 1124 The Liao Prince Yeliu Tashi undertakes a campaign to the west and founds in Turkestan the realm of Kara-Khitai (1126).
- 1135 Kabul, Khan of the Mongols, makes a raid into the Kin Empire.
- 1141 Yeliu Tashi, Emperor of Kara-Khitai, conquers Sanjar, Sultan of Persia.
- 1145 Otto, Bishop of Freising, writes to Pope Eugenius III about a certain Prester John who has come from the East and conquered the ruler of the Medes and Persians. Thus originated the legend of Prester John who was hastening to the help of the crusaders.
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- 1162 Birth of Temuchin.
- 1175 Death of Yesugai.
- 1188 Victory over Targutai and the Taijiuts.
- 1194 Temuchin aided by Togrul, Khan of the Keraites, in alliance with the Kins undertakes a campaign against the Tartars, and the Kin Emperor appoints him Chao-churi, Warden of the Marches.
- 1201 Jamuga is chosen Gur-Khan. Temuchin defeats Jamuga's army.
- 1203 War between Togrul Khan of the Keraites and Temuchin.
- 1204 Temuchin's campaign against the Naimans.
- 1206 Temuchin is appointed Khakan and assumes the name of Jenghiz.
- 1207 Campaign against the Tangut State of Hsi-Hsia.
- 1208 Death of the Kin Emperor Ch'ang-Tsung. Prince Yuen-chi succeeds him as Emperor Wei-Wang.
- 1209 New campaign against the Kin Emperor.
- 1211-1216 War against the Kin Empire.
- 1213 Palace revolution in Peking. Murder of Emperor Wei-Wang.
- 1214 Truce with Hsuan-tsung.
- 1215 Fall of Peking.
- 1217 Commercial Treaty with Muhammed. Jebei's campaign against Kara-Khitai.
- 1217-1218 Muhammed's campaign against Bagdad.

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- 1219 The crusaders take Damietta.

- 1220 Coronation of Emperor Frederick II (November 5th).
 1221 Jacques de Vitry writes to Pope Honorius III about King David (April 18th).
 Evacuation of Damietta (August).
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- 1219-1222 War against the Khwarizmian Empire.
 1219 Battle in the Fergana Valley.
 1220 Taking of Bokhara and Samarkand.
 Sabutai's pursuit of Shah Muhammed.
 Jenghiz Khan's sons take the field against Khwarizmia.
 1221 Muhammed's death (February 10th). The hunt at
 Termed. Tuli's campaign against Khorassan.
 Jelal ed-Din's flight to Afghanistan.
 Return of Ogatai and Jagatai from the campaign against
 Khwarizmia.
 Battle beside the Indus (December 9th).
- 1221-1224 Sabutai's invasion of Europe.
 1222 Reception of Ch'ang-Ch'un (May, in the Hindu-Kush Mountains; September and October, at Samarkand).
- 1223 On the way back to Mongolia.
 Mukuli's death.
 Sabutai defeats the Russians beside the Kalka (May 31st).
 Death of Hsuan-tsung, the Kin Emperor. His son Shu-hsu succeeds (1223-1234).
 Death of the Emperor of Hsi-Hsia.
- 1224 Return of Sabutai. Jenghiz Khan orders the dispatch of a punitive expedition against Juji.
- 1225 Death of Juji. Return to Mongolia.
- 1226-1227 War against Hsi-Hsia.
- 1227 Death of Jenghiz Khan.
- 1229-1241 Reign of Ogatai.
 1230-1234 Definitive conquest of Kin Empire.
 1232 Death of Tuli.
 1235 The Mongol Kuriltai decides upon four wars:
 against the Sungs, against Korea, against
 Western Asia, and against Europe.
- 1236-1242 Batu's campaign against Europe.
 1237-1238 Winter campaign against Northern
 Russia.
 1240 Fall of Kiev (December 6th).

- 1241 Invasion of Poland, Germany, and Hungary.
 April 9th. Battle of Liegnitz.
 April 11th. Battle beside the Sajo.
 April 11th. Storming of Hermannstadt.
- 1245-1247 Giovanni Piano Carpini's journey.
- 1246-1248 Reign of Kuyuk.
- 1251-1259 Reign of Mangu.
 1253-1255 Rubruquis' embassy.
 1255 Hulagu's invasion of Western Asia.
 1257-1259 Mangu's campaign against the Sung Empire.
- 1260 Defeat of the Mongols by the Mamelukes.
- 1260-1294 Kublai's reign.
 1266 Nicolo and Matteo Polo visit Kublai.
 1267-1279 Definitive conquest of Sung Empire.
 1271-1295 Marco Polo's travels.
- 1335 Break-up of the realm of the Ilkhans.
- 1368 Expulsion of the Yuen Dynasty from China.
- 1369 Tamerlane has himself proclaimed Grand Emir of Transoxania.
- 1380 Dmitri of Moscow defeats Mamai at Kulikovo.
- 1381 After his victory over Mamai, Toktamish becomes Khan of the Golden Horde.
- 1389 Victory of the Turks over Serbia at Kossovo.
- 139- Tamerlane's campaign against Toktamish.
- 1395 Tamerlane lays Russia waste.
- 1396 Bajazet annihilates the Christian army at Nikopolis.
- 1398 Tamerlane's Indian campaign.
- 1399 The Lithuanian-Polish army cut to pieces by the Golden Horde beside the Vorskla.
- 1400-1401 Tamerlane's Syrio-Mesopotamian campaign.
- 1402 Tamerlane defeats Bajazet near Angora.
- 1405 Death of Tamerlane.
- 1453 Constantinople taken by the Turks.
- 1472 Grand Prince Ivan III of Moscow marries Sophia Paleologa, heiress of Byzantium.
- 1492 Discovery of America.
- 1498 Discovery of sea-route to India.
- 1502 Definitive destruction of the Golden Horde.
- 1533-1584 Ivan the Terrible.
 1552 Muscovy annexes the Khanate of Kazan.
 1554 Muscovy annexes the Khanate of Astrakhan.

- 1640 Establishment of Central-Asiatic Empire under Batur-Hun-taiji.
1644 Overthrow of the Ming Dynasty by the Manchus.
1658 Manchu troops check the advance of Cossacks down the Amur.
1675 First Russian embassy to the Emperor of China.
1691 At a kuriltai the Mongols decide to subordinate themselves to the Manchu Emperors.
1682-1725 Peter the Great.
1759 Annexation of Eastern Turkestan by China.
1904-1905 Russo-Japanese war.
1911 China becomes a republic. Outer Mongolia declares itself independent.
1912 Russia guarantees the autonomy of Outer Mongolia.
1920 Ungern-Sternberg occupies Urga.
1921 Provisional revolutionary government in Urga.
1924 Proclamation of the "Autonomous Mongolian People's Republic" in Outer Mongolia.
1932 Formation of the Republic of Manchukuo.
1934 Manchukuo becomes an Empire.
1936 Military alliance between Russia and Outer Mongolia.
1937 Formation of a "Federative Autonomous Government of Inner Mongolia" and of the "Committee of the Mongolian Union."

PRINCIPAL PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE BOOK

Abaka—Ilkhan, son of Hulagu.

Abu-Said—last of the Ilkhans.

Ahmed—Sultan of Western Persia in the days of Tamerlane.

Aldshai—Tamerlane's first wife.

Altan—Jenghiz Khan's uncle.

Argun—Fourth Ilkhan, Hulagu's grandson.

Arik-Buka—Tuli's youngest son.

Baber—the Great Mogul, founder of the Indian Mogul Dynasty.

Baibuka Tayan—Khan of the Naimans.

Bajazet—Turkish Sultan.

Batu—Khan of the "Golden Horde," Juji's son and successor.

Bayan—Kublai's commander-in-chief in the war against the Sungs.

Belgutei—Jenghiz Khan's half-brother.

Bereke—Batu's brother, and in succession to him Khan of the Golden Horde.

Bibars—Leader of Mamelukes, Sultan of Egypt.

Bogurchi—Jenghiz Khan's first follower.

Bortei—Jenghiz-Khan's principal wife.

Carpini, Giovanni Piano—Franciscan Friar, papal legate at the court of the Great Khan (1245-1247).

Ch'ang-Ch'un—Chinese sage.

Ch'ang-Tsung—Kin Emperor. (1189-1208).

Daaritai—Jenghiz Khan's uncle.

Dai Sechen—Chieftain of a Jungirat tribe, Bortei's father.

Fatima—Turakina's favourite, a Persian slave-girl.

Ghazan—seventh Ilkhan.

Gokchu-Teb-Tengri—Shaman, son of Munlik.

Guchluk—Naiman Prince, son of Baibuka Tayan.

Han-Sadeh—Tamerlane's daughter-in-law.

Hassan ben Sabbah—the Sheik-al-Jabal, or Old Man of the Mountain, founder of the sect of the Assassins.

Hodsha—Shah of Southern Persia in the days of Tamerlane.

Hsuan-tsung—Kin Emperor, successor of Wei-Wang (1213-1223).

Hulagu—second son of Tuli and grandson of Jenghiz, the first of the Ilkhans.

Hu-sha-hu—a Chinese general during Jenghiz' invasion of China.

Jagatai—Jenghiz Khan's second son.

Jamuga Sechen—Churiat chieftain, Jenghiz Khan's blood-brother, later his enemy.

Jehangir—Tamerlane's eldest son.

Jelal ed-Din—son of Shah Mohammed of Khwarizmia, and his successor.

Jelmi—Jenghiz Khan's second follower.

Jirgadei—the original name of Jebei, a Taijiut who wounded Temuchin in battle, and subsequently became one of his generals.

Juji—Jenghiz Khan's eldest son.

Kabul—Khan of the Mongols, Jenghiz Khan's great-grandfather.

Kaidu—Ogatai's grandson, Kublai's adversary.

Kao-chi—Kin commander-in-chief as successor to Hu-sha-hu.

Kasar—Jenghiz Khan's brother.

Katul—last Khan of the Mongols, uncle of Yesukai.

Khalil—son of Miran Shah and Han-Sadeh.

Kotyan—Khan of the Kumans.

Kublai Khan—third son of Tuli, Khan of Khans and first Emperor of the Yuen Dynasty, Fourth Great Khan.

Kuchar—a relative of Jenghiz Khan.

Kulan—a Merkit woman, Jenghiz Khan's favourite wife.

Kuyuk—Khan of Khans, son and successor of Ogatai.

Kuzgan—Emir of Transoxania, Tamerlane's liege-lord.

Mamai—penultimate Khan of the Golden Horde.

Mangu—Tuli's eldest son, and third Great Khan.

Mansur—Shah of Southern Persia in the days of Tamerlane.

Miran-Shah—Tamerlane's third son.

Mohammed Ala-ud-din—Shah of Khwarizmia.

Muhammed-Sultan—Tamerlane's grandson, son of Jehangir.

Mukuli—one of Jenghiz Khan's generals, later Regent of the Kin Empire.

Munlik—Yesukai's vassal, father of Gokchu the Shaman, subsequently second husband of Yulun, and therefore Jenghiz Khan's stepfather.

Nogai—Viceroy of South Russia, vassal of the Golden Horde.

Ogatai—Jenghiz Khan's third son and successor.

Ogul-Gaimish—Kuyuk's first wife.
Omar-Sheik—Tamerlane's second son.

Pir-Muhammed—Tamerlane's grandson, son of Jehangir.
Pu-Yi—Emperor of Manchukuo, under Japanese protection.

Rashid-ud-Din—Ghazan's historiographer.

Sabutai—Jenghiz Khan's general, one of the nine Orlok.
Sengun—Prince of the Keraites, Togrul's son.
Shigi Kutuku—Jenghiz Khan's chief justice.
Sorgan-Shira—Taijiut warrior, later one of the Orlok.
Sucha-beki—Jenghiz Khan's cousin.
Syurkuk-Teni—Tuli's wife.

Tamerlane (the Great)—Emir of Transoxania.
Targutai—Taijiut chieftain, a relative of Yesukai.
Tatatungo—an Uighur, Jenghiz Khan's Keeper of the Seal.
Temuchin—later Jenghiz Khan.
Timur—Kublai's grandson, second Emperor of the Yuen Dynasty.
Toghon-Timur—last Emperor of the Yuen Dynasty.
Togrul—chieftain of the Keraites, later the Wang-Khan.
Toktamish—Khan of the Golden Horde, Tamerlane's protegee and later his enemy.
Toktu—Khan of the Golden Horde.
Toto—ruler of the Merkits.
Tuli—Jenghiz Khan's youngest son, "guardian of the hearth".
Turakina—Ogatai's first wife, Regent after her husband's death, mother of Kuyuk.

Uzbek—Toktu's nephew, Khan of the Golden Horde.

Wan-yen—Commandant of Peking in the reign of Hsuan-tsung.
Wei-Wang—*see* Yuen-chi.

Yeliu-Ch'uts'ai—Chinese sage, soothsayer, and astrologer, subsequently vice-minister and intimate friend of Jenghiz Khan.
Yesukai-Bagatur—Mongolian Chieftain. Jenghiz Khan's father.
Yuen-chi—Prince of the Kin Dynasty, who became Emperor under the name of Wei-Wang, succeeding Ch'ang Tsung and reigning 1208-1213.
Yulun-Eke (Mother Cloud)—Jenghiz Khan's mother.

Zain ed-Din—Sheik, Tamerlane's tutor and adviser.

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